

THE
ART
OF
KNOWING
MANKIND.

THE
A R T
O F

K N O W
M A N K I N D



THE
ART
OF
KNOWING
MANKIND.

— "Aufus
" Detrahere & pellem, nitidus quâ quisque per ora
" Cederet, introrsum turpis." HOR.

LONDON,

Printed for J. WILKIE, in *St. Paul's Church-yard.*
MDCC^{LXVI}.

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"Dictionnaire & poëme, mis en vers par
 "Cesaire, inventeur de la langue."

LONDON
 Printed for J. Walker, in St. Paul's Church-yard.
 MDCCLXXI

P R E F A C E.

ALTHO' the vices of our age cannot without injustice be compared with those of JUVENAL'S time, in which disorder and folly were carried beyond all bounds, they are, however, great enough to determine an author wavering about the species of his writing: "Difficile est satyram non scribere."

BUT tho' I should appear to imitate his principle, I shall take great care not to follow him in the design and execution of the work. His satire is devoid of all respect, and destitute of all modesty; without any regard,

vi P R E F A C E.

without any distinction, for rank or personages, without any charitable caution for the most hidden defects, and full of a bitter spleen, which sufficiently characterizes the author.

For me, who live in an age more enlightened and clear in its religion, and more rigid in its morals, charity alone, which ought to be the sole motive and means of all our discourses and all our steps, to insure happiness, repose, and union between us and our brethren : Charity, I say, is doubtless the sole motive, which induced me to attempt leading men to the knowledge of themselves, and of those with whom civil society, the interest of their affairs, or chance, procured them any engagement or connexion.

MANY authors have learnedly, and not without effect, treated of the knowledge of one's-self ; and amongst the
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P R E F A C E. vii

the rest, the celebrated ABBADIE ; but there are scarce any who have attempted the knowlege of other men in general : however, it is on that account not the less necessary ; and I will venture to say, that it is more useful for policy.

IN fact, the knowledge of one's-self is merely speculative, and leads man to make continual observations and reflexions on himself and on his conduct ; but of what use can this speculation be in business, in commerce, and in civil society, except to lead to integrity of heart, to regulate the intentions and the conduct of man ? Whereas the knowledge of other men makes us take the proper measures and steps to act and treat safely with them : it acquaints us with their different inclinations, the various motives which animate them ; and it enables us to pre-

viii P R E F A C E

vent the snares and wicked designs: they may prepare for us: it gives us that necessary insight and circumspection, which enables us to avoid being dazzled at the deceitful appearance of a glittering action, and to shun bestowing those praises on the unworthy, which are the just reward of virtue; and in short, it serves to develope so ingeniously the windings of the human heart, that the most minute circumstance scarce escapes its search. The work of Mr. CHAMBERS, which is at present the principal one on this subject, is, if I may be allowed to confirm the judgement of most learned men by my own, so diffused, and at the same time so abstruse, that all the justice one can do it, is to regard it as the work of a philosopher, who, content to think judiciously, and to speak solidly, following the principles of his science, troubled himself but little to reduce what he thought, and

P R E F A C E. ix

and what he would write, to the rules of policy and custom. So that it is, to speak properly, an anatomy of virtues and of passions, highly serviceable to those who apply themselves to the physical knowledge of things by their causes and effects ; but entirely useless to those whom civil society, commerce, and business, unavoidably engage in connexions with the rest of mankind.

I HAVE endeavoured to characterize virtues and vices in such a manner, that they may easily be known ; but protest, at the same time, that I had no design any character should suffer application ; and that I never had, nor yet have, any intention of giving offence.

SOME experience in the world, joined to a close observation, has furnished
me

x P R E F A C E.

me with these notions : and if I have not expressed them in the most elegant manner, I have at least taken care to impart them in a sensible one, and in a stile so concise, as not to embarrass the reader with long periods, which too often express but little in many words.

I have endeavoured to characterize virtues and vices in such a manner, that they may easily be known ; but protest, at the same time, that I had no design any character should suffer application ; and that I never had, nor yet have, any intention of giving of-

Some experience in the world, joined to a close observation, has furnished me

C O N -

C O N T E N T S.

I N T R O D U C T I O N.	Page.
Of Justice.	3
Of Constraint.	6
Of Temperance.	12
Of Prudence.	17
Of Honesty.	24
Of Gratitude.	32
Of the Fidelity of Subjects to their Princes.	42
Of Fidelity in keeping a Secret.	46
Of Sincerity.	50
Of Officious Virtue.	53
Of Goodness.	57
Of Humility.	59
Of Modesty.	63
Of Good Nature.	69
Of Indulgence.	75
Of Pity.	79
Of Friendship.	84
Of the Chastity of Women.	92
	Of

xii C O N T E N T S.

Of Disinterestedness.	95
Of the Love of Truth.	99
Of Power of over one's-self.	104
Of Moderation.	108
Of Modesty in Men.	111
Of the Modesty of Women.	115
Of Patience in Sickness.	119
Of Contempt for Death.	123
Of Constancy.	129
Of Generosity.	136
Of the Magnanimity of Philosophers.	142
Of Valour.	152
Of a Contempt for Riches.	160
Of Moderation in Expences.	167
Of Grief for the Death of Relations, &c.	170
Of Gravity.	175
Of Mildness.	182
Of Complaisance.	187
Of Affability.	194
Of Generosity.	197
Of Mercy.	204

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THE
ART
OF
KNOWING

MAN K I N D.

WE have an interest in knowing ourselves, and in knowing others. Without that knowledge, we cannot fail of becoming a dupe either to them or to ourselves, and to form extravagant projects. I do not intend to mention any other reasons, tho' numerous.

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—THE way to arrive at this two-fold knowledge, is to study the natural inclinations of mankind. The most solid philosophers have agreed, that we can have no idea of the soul, nor any acquaintance with its nature, but what arises from its modifications, that is to say, from experience. To widen the avenues to this valuable knowledge, to enable man to judge with precision of the excellencies or defects of himself and all around him, is the task I propose in the following sheets. Three particulars, however, I must beg my readers to keep in remembrance; first, That there are certain privileg'd souls, which are affected with the common corruptions of nature in a much less degree than others; secondly, That I speak here of that part of mankind entirely abandoned, and deprived of the assistance of grace; and thirdly, That the difference of conditions and situations in life causes the different measure of passions, which display their power in the destruction of virtue.

KNOWING MANKIND. 3

OF JUSTICE.

IT must be allowed, that a more agreeable subject cannot be conceived, than to see all mankind equally zealous, some to cause an observance of, and others to follow, the rules of equity, through a sincere regard for their utility. But where can one meet with this true attachment to justice? Is it in those sovereigns who have taken the greatest pains to establish justice in their respective states? Was this the concern of the pagan emperors, or even of the christian kings, who did not conduct or regulate themselves by the maxims and spirit of christianity, but by an ardent and passionate desire of ruling, and a truly human policy? Was it any other thing in many of them, than their natural fierceness, which, not being able to bear those who had the audacity to form parties and declare war against them, hurried them away with a rage which ordained the greatest severity of punishment for the offenders? Is it any thing else in others than the love of their repose, which renders

4 THE ART OF

them diligent in stifling seditious enterprises, and strict in executing the rigour of the law against the chief disturbers? The integrity of magistrates is chiefly owing to a thirst for eminence in reputation, or in expectation of preferment. For, as self-love induces men to make their vices and their virtues subservient to their interest, from thence it comes to pass that corrupt judges do justice, some to enrich themselves, and others to gain the esteem of the public, and to be looked upon, by kings and ministers, as men qualified to fill the highest posts of magistracy. The justice of private persons, who are cautious of hurting the interests of their fellow-subjects, is for fear of their injustice being retorted upon them; for a man who sees himself engaged in a particular society encounters more uneasiness than if he was in the midst of a forest frequented by savage beasts, because he not only fears for his life, but for his fortune, his repose, and his reputation; so that, continually considering of the means to avoid those accidents which threaten him, he sees none more likely

KNOWING MANKIND. 5

likely to secure him than observing the laws of justice with respect to others. This opinion does not seem to be ill founded; for he that acts with so much circumspection as never to do others the least prejudice, engages them, for their own reputation's sake, to live honestly with regard to him, and to avoid doing him an injury. Besides, one has not the boldness to abuse a man who lives peaceably, and justly, with the world; in short, good men imprint a respect, which guards their fortunes and honour from violation, as certainly as if they were sacred vases. Thus the justice of particulars is nothing more than address, which serves to defend their lives, fortunes, and honour, from the dangers to which they are liable. The justice of philosophers was nothing more than a desire to distinguish themselves from the rest of mankind, by the uprightness of their actions, and to propagate the opinion, that they alone lived according to the rules of reason. The justice of the Jews proceeded from their apprehensions lest God should abandon them, lest he should deliver them

6 THE ART OF

up to their enemies, or should make all their vineyards and lands barren. There is scarce any such thing as justice among men, since there is scarce any one that follows it through love of itself; and amongst the sovereigns who establish it, the judges who administer it, and the particulars who practise it, their whole intention is their own promotion and ambition: and since even in the philosophers, it was nothing but vanity; and in the Jews, who were most zealous for the law, but a servile and interesting fear.

OF CONSTRAINT.

PHILOSOPHERS are all prepossessed with the opinion, that since the reason of man is fully persuaded that he should follow what was good in all his actions, it was sufficiently powerful to enable him to subdue his disorderly affections, and to live virtuously and happily.

BUT

KNOWING MANKIND. 7

BUT if they had reflected a little on what pass'd within themselves, they might have observed that the passions rise in an instant in the soul ; that their first effect is to extinguish therein the light of reason, and to deprive mankind of the sight of those grand maxims, on which, according to their system, depends all the force of wisdom. In fact, how can a man, who receives from another a box on the ear, a caning-bout, or a horse-whipping, adhere to the rules of life which the study of philosophy has taught him ? The Stoics and Cynics should rather allow that this is impossible, who only pretend that blows are not injurious to the wise, though, at the same time, they grant they are sensible of pain, because the connexion of the soul and body is so intimate, that whatever maladies affect the one, immediately communicate their poignancy to the other. Thus, a man who is beaten no sooner feels the blow, than he is impetuously hurried away by so fierce a desire of revenge, that reason has neither liberty nor leisure to exert itself.

8 THE ART OF

It is not by sudden trials alone, that we prove that our passions and desires govern us; we prove it even in those which we have foreseen; I know that I must trade with a man who is furious, difficult, and unreasonable. I do not go to him till I have formed a resolution not to be out of temper, let him say what he pleases, or do what he will; notwithstanding, when I have met with difficulty in making him hearken to reason, my passion is kindled, and I am hurried away; and I then perceive the miserable condition to which sin has reduced mankind, since they do the mischief which they did not design, and are unable to preserve the command even of their own hearts. What is astonishing, is, that this happens to Christians, who are inspired with grace, and are sincerely pious; and this is what makes them observe, with how much reason the Son of God has so strongly recommended to them to watch over themselves, and, by continual prayers, to invoke the divine assistance.

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KNOWING MANKIND. 9

I CANNOT comprehend how the philosophers should be unacquainted with the weakness and imbecillity of reason ; and it appears still more strange that they should perceive the revolt of the passions, and the viciousness of our natural inclinations ; and should make no difficulty of owning, that they stumbled on those faults they condemned most, and which they endeavoured to shun. The experience of their weakness was not sufficient to cause a change in their opinion ; because vanity made them believe they did not fall victims to voluptuousness, to anger, or any other passion ; but through neglect of what should have fortified reason, and kept in constant meditation our duty, and the observance of the rules of wisdom. But what was the cause of Socrates's patience, and that of all the rest of the pagan philosophers, who gave such proofs of it ? It was the most delicate ambition of which the human heart is capable ; it was a desire of persuading the world that they had attained to the perfection of reason ; and that upon the most

important subjects they were more clear than the rest of mankind. I allow that the pagan virtues have a false glare ; but one has no reason to complain at their being condemned, since the judgment one forms of those that possessed them, is conformable to that of the intelligent beings who practised them, and who have not judged of them by a single action, but by those of their whole life ; whilst one judges of those but by what faith and our experience teaches us to believe, that all our inclinations are depraved. For it is ridiculous to think they were less vicious and more governable in the pagans, whom God had delivered over to the affections of their hearts, than in the Christians, in whom the grace of Jesus Christ is continually working to purify them, and to moderate their violence. In a word, we do the pagans justice, when we forbear saying, that the end designed in all their actions was vicious, and content ourselves with hinting, that pleasure, interest, and variety, were the principal motives of their behaviour.

KNOWING MANKIND. II

IN truth, it is amazing, that there are some Christians, who are so infatuated with the veneration they entertain for the antient philosophers, that they represent their virtues, not only as real virtues, but even perfect and sublime. Do not they perceive that this whimsical opinion renders the coming of the Son of God quite useless, and annihilates the merit and fruit of his passion?

THE patience of the sages of the age, who do not take offence at the injurious words uttered against them, is, in general, a fear of exposing themselves to less tolerable treatment. It is sometimes a desire of deferring vengeance, and of taking it at their own time, and without danger. The patience of those who take no vengeance at all, proceeds from the fear of inconveniences, which might arise from that vengeance. Whoever wants to take away the life of another, puts his own in danger. A man who has taken revenge on another in a matter of any consequence, is no longer in
In B 6 safety ;

safty ; and if this happens among families, it establishes an everlasting quarrel between them.—The patience of sovereigns, in cases where haughty subjects are deficient in respect, is but an effort which they make to avoid the shame of violence ; it is a political dissimulation which tends to occasion a belief that they are worthy of the rank they hold, and that they have no less power over themselves than over the people who are subject to them ; it is a skilful conduct, to gain the heart of those, whose indiscreet words they have supported, together with their inconsiderate proceedings ; and to gain the esteem of others for their goodness and indulgence.

OF TEMPERANCE.

PLATO said, that the virtue of his age was a false cure of the maladies of the soul ; that those who have piqued themselves on being wise, delivered themselves from the most apparent errors, by falling
into

KNOWING MANKIND. 13

into others less sensible and less known; and that they overcame the passions by the passions. What this philosopher said of virtue in general, may be very properly applied to temperance: for the greatest part of those who follow its rules the most strictly, subdue their gluttony and incontinency thro' the love of life, the desire of enjoying a perfect state of health, and through avarice. It seems, likewise, that these three passions keep their natural order, in the production of temperance; and that the principal of them is, the desire of living long. This passion, does not make itself remarkable by its transport and violence, as anger or vengeance; it may be truly said, that it is the strongest of all passions; and it shews its power in this, that poverty, the most cruel griefs, and the greatest misfortunes, are not able to make us hate life: so that it is no wonder, if we meet with sensible men, who, seeing that a number of people abridge their days by sumptuous living and debauchery, make strong resolutions to resist the inclinations they have towards voluptuousness;

or

or that there are some among them who observe a regimen all their life ; or if there are likewise those who keep a rigorous abstinence, and resist daily their appetite, and do not take half the nourishment which might be necessary for them.

THE desire of preserving a life free from pain, and exempt from the frequent inconveniencies which render it disagreeable, is the second cause of temperance : for, besides that health is so great an happiness, that the man who possesses it is always content ; besides, its putting a man in a condition to use all sorts of exercises, and to take all the diversions he loves ; it is not living, it is to be dying all their days, to drag such a languishing life as those lead, who are subject to the sciatic, the gout, or the gravel. It is to escape these maladies, or to mitigate them, that so many persons renounce their taste and their pleasure, abstain from wine, and avoid eating season'd meats ; and yet this abstinence is preposterously accounted virtue.

KNOWING MANKIND. 15

It is the same with regard to those who neither haunt taverns, nor bad houses; they restrain their disorderly affections, and shun those places of debauchery, thro' fear of catching some dreadful distemper, which may continue for life, and cause continual anxieties and uneasiness.

I SAID, that the passions which produced temperance keep their natural order in its production, because it is in this manner they are ranged. The first desire of mankind is to live: the second to live in health and happiness: the third to amass fortunes, not only to keep them from necessity, but also to furnish the conveniences of life. Thus, it is avarice, which is the last cause of temperance, and which, of itself alone, often occasions a sort of sobriety and continency. The people who are actuated by this passion, have always an apprehension of falling into poverty, and a strong persuasion that money is an infallible friend, always ready to assist us in all our wants, and to comfort us in all our misfortunes.

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This is the reason they search for every method of enriching themselves; and as there is none more certain than parsimony, and it is that alone which is properly in our power, they never fail to make use of it, and to retrench their expences, especially those of debauchery, which ruin the fortunes of most men.

To these general causes of temperance, we may add some particular ones; the principal of which is the inability of eating much, which certain people make pass for abstinence, with an industry equal to that with which mankind sometimes make virtues of the defects of wit and temper; for, as they who speak little, through sterility of invention, endeavour to make it believed that it is because they are sensible and judicious; in the same manner, they who eat little, through the smallness of their appetites, insinuate to others, that they can govern themselves, and thereby have an advantage over those who eat more than they, thro' the necessity they have for a greater quantity of nourishment. One may say the same

KNOWING MANKIND. 17

same thing of those who will have their continency attributed to the power they have over their inclinations, and to their virtue, although it is the consequence of the extreme coldness of their constitutions. The sobriety of the studious men, should rather be attributed to their desire of preserving their senses in proper tone, and their apprehension of impairing their understanding by the fumes and vapours of the stomach rising into the head, when they had gormandized exceedingly; and the consequence of their temperance is, that they enjoy the whole pleasure of their soul, which is possessed of a desire for knowledge, and of making a considerable progress in the sciences.

OF PRUDENCE.

PRUDENCE is the soul of Justice, of Power, and of Temperance. It is she, who ordering them, gives them life, and elevates them to the degree of virtues. But
what

what judgment must one form of the prudence of the sages of this age; which when she should have been as much enlightened as she is blind, in the pursuits of the means she might make use of to arrive at our intended ends, should not deserve our praises, through the want of uprightness in those whom she respected; for all the philosophers agree, that it is not sufficient to make a person virtuous that he acts in a virtuous manner; but that to act virtuously, he must bring them to the very end to which all human actions should tend! The pagan philosophers not only were mistaken in esteeming real honesty as a divinity, but also in believing, that true honesty was in their heart, whereas it was only in their imagination; for the truth is, that they loved, and fought for, the glory that followed honest actions; and that they were not affected, at least in general, with the becomingness of their duty, but with the approbation, and praise, that is given to those who acquit themselves truly. What caused their error, was the honesty of their actions, from whence they

KNOWING MANKIND. 19

they inferred, that the same honesty was to be found in their intentions. This is also the mistake those gentry lie under, which we call men of honour: they are persuaded, that thro' all their actions they have no incitement but the view of acting honestly, and that they love honesty; whereas it is not honesty they love, but the reputation it acquires them, and the rank it obtains them among men.

THE second cause of error among the philosophers, was, the delicacy of their ambition, which was so extremely nice, that it robbed them of their understanding, and gave them a sovereign contempt for riches, for dignities, and for the approbation of mankind; to the end that contempt for riches, offices, and dignities should set them above those who possessed them, and that they might be thought the more worthy of praise, by seeming to set the least value on praises and glory.

IGNORANCE of the true state of the human heart, was the third cause of the opinion

nion the philosophers formed, that true goodness was the principle of all those who did any thing praise-worthy or virtuous; for they know not the recesses of the heart of man; and they had no light, nor even suspicion, of the change it undergoes with regard to sin; or by what means it is become a slave to the passions. This appeared by their reasonings and their maxims; the first ground of which is, that reason, which, by the dignity and excellence of nature, should command mankind, does command effectually: from thence they concluded, that it was that which made them do every honourable act, as also every wise and equitable one; whereas it led them to these actions only to satisfy and serve their ambition, which was their reigning passion. It is true, they are excusable for not knowing the cause of the change which mankind suffered, but they are not for being ignorant of the change; for it is pardonable in persons who live without reflexion, not to know what passes within themselves; but that the curious observers of nature, that men, who devoted
their

KNOWING MANKIND. 21

their principal application to study and the knowledge of themselves, should not have remarked, that it was no longer reason which conducted and governed mankind, is really wonderful! In short, how is it possible to conceive, that men of ingenuity should not have discovered, that reason, with all its force and all its industry, could not destroy a passion which is rooted in the heart of man; that she could not eradicate it, I say, either by the assistance of age, or by the force of any example, or by the fear of any misfortune? how is it possible to conceive that this could slip their observation, which persons of the lowest capacity beheld and felt? A slight attention to what they experienced themselves, was more than sufficient to make them acquainted with the state of reason; to convince them of its weakness; and to give them to understand, that man, who originally was placed in the most elevated situation of life, who inhabited this tranquil and luminous region, where he beheld and regulated every thing both within and without himself; that this same
man

man is now plunged beneath the senses, where he revels in pleasures, as if he had been born for them, and they had been his lot. They would have seen likewise, that though reason had lost the power she had over man, yet she had not entirely lost her light, enough of which still remained to mark out to them their duty; and that it is she, who in all ages, and all places of the world, has taught men to know their parents, to do justice, to sooth the pains of the wretched, and to expose their life in defence of their country. But they would also have seen at the same time, that since self-love, has made itself the master and tyrant of man, it does not suffer any virtuous action to be done by him, which is not useful to itself, and employs every thing for its success; so that it is only to answer its own ends, that reason excites men to render the due respect to their parents, to succour the necessitous in time of want, and to observe equity in their treaties with each other. Thus, they do not ordinarily acquit themselves of all these duties, but through a motive of self-love,
and

KNOWING MANKIND. 23

and to procure a completion of their designs. I said ordinarily; because I should not enter into the disputes of divines, who make a question if the pagan philosophers proposed honesty, and the uprightness of virtue in some of their actions. The point of this controversy makes nothing with regard to our subject; since one does not judge of men by what they seldom do, and still less by what they might do, but by what they commonly do. But all the world is of opinion, that either interest, or vanity, are, in the generality of mankind, the principal incentives of action.

AN other of opinion has given it as his opinion, that the outward morality of women, was but an art to appear virtuous; one may say almost the same thing of the probity and honesty of men. In fact, it is not less true to be people equally religious, and as virtuous in not acting contrary to probity, in private, as when there are witnesses; than to find men or women, who attack and repulse the enemy in the night, with as much civility, as if they were fighting at noon-day, in the presence

OF VIRTUES,

Which may be ranged under the title of
J U S T I C E.

OF HONESTY.

AN author of repute has given it as his opinion, that the outward modesty of women, was but an art to appear virtuous ; one may say almost the same thing of the probity and honesty of men. In fact, it is not less rare to see people equally religious, and as punctual in not acting contrary to probity, in private, as when there are witnesses ; than to find men of valour, who attack and repulse the enemy in the night, with as much bravery, as if they were fighting at noon-day, in the presence

KNOWING MANKIND. 25

presence of their general. It is very rare also, to see men, whose honesty is so great and so pure, that it might not be mov'd by menaces, nor tempted by promises, but should still be able to resist the whole power of the passions. To be thoroughly convinced if there is one of that sort, it is necessary that every one take a review of all the actions of his life; and see if any interest of hatred, of revenge, of love, or of ambition, has never been able to wound his faith and integrity; if it has never happened to him, to please a woman, whom he has idolized, that he has revealed an important secret confided to him; if the fear of falling into disgrace with a favourite has never prevented his giving evidence of the truth, when his testimony would have fav'd the reputation of a slander'd man; in short, if jealousy has not made him deny the merit and glory of an heroic action, that the best of his friends have effected in field of battle. I am sure that, if one examines himself with any degree of care, there would not be one who would find himself innocent, and who

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would

would not recollect that he has often failed in his honesty, because he had it in his power to do so unpunished, and has received great advantages from it. But, when one would suppose, that there are people whose honesty is incorruptible, it is visible, that the motive, by which they practise, does not allow one to rank it among virtuous qualities, because these motives are vicious, and the principal of all is a criminal ambition. To put this in a proper light, it must be observed, that the true inclination of a man possessed of self-love would be, that his wit might be superior to that of every other person; that every thing should yield to his power; and that all mankind in general should be subservient to him: but as he finds in himself, and in others, so great a resistance, and such a number of obstacles, which oppose his desire, he dissembles, and conceals his inclination, according as he sees more or less probability of satisfying it; and when he sees none at all, he moderates his desires, and reduces them to the wish of a considerable rank among those,
whose

KNOWING MANKIND. 27

whose master it is out of his power to become. From thence it comes to pass, that the great are incessantly thinking of aggrandizing themselves; and when they see there is no farther possibility of succeeding in their desires, they cause at least a just value to be set on their birth, and treat the rest of mankind as if they were a species inferior to themselves. From thence it comes to pass, that those who are of low birth, work, in spite of fortune, to establish among men, by means of virtue, several ranks, and place themselves in the first, by their honesty: to which we consent with the greater facility, as we cannot pass from honesty, into a society of men which we love, in proportion to the hatred which we have for treasonable practices.

THEY who observe exactly the law of probity, do not only see that the whole world agrees with them, in ranking them above others, on account of the necessity there is for them. They would see also, that men of honour and probity are very rare: that this scarceness makes the persons

by whom one would choose to be most considered, seek for them, and desire them for their friends and confidants; and that it is very necessary to support their rank and their privileges: they would see, likewise, that there is nothing so disgraceful, and so ignominious, as roguery, or a piece of villainy, detected; and that the persons to whom this has happened, have never recovered the slur. They would see likewise, that tho' gentlemen of honour do not succeed so often in the world, as corrupt and bad men, it is certain, nevertheless, that the success of roguery and treason is not infallible; that they are not always recompensed; and that, when they are, the persons in whose favour they are committed, pay the service the villainy brings them, and at the same time utterly abominate the perpetrators. It is with these views, the honesty of those is formed, who are said to have a pure heart. Interest begets honesty in base mercenary souls; and it is in them only, a desire of acquiring riches. It may be said, in contradiction to what we have just asserted, that the principle

KNOWING MANKIND. 29

eiple of honesty in honest people, is but as
 ambition to be illustrious without expence
 or dignity, and to have a considerable
 rank among men. There are many who
 act thus in private; from whence it is con-
 cluded, that they act through the principle
 of honesty, and not through any desire of
 being esteemed and honoured, among men.
 To which I answer, with St. THOMAS,
 that there are certain persons, possessed of
 so happy a disposition, that they act up-
 rightly by the sole influence of nature. I
 answer in the second place, that he who
 does those actions of honesty, although they
 are done in private, does them oftentimes
 through a design of being approved. To
 render this paradox intelligible, we must
 observe, that men are so vain-glorious, and
 greedy of praise, that their greatest learn-
 ing, and most excellent virtues, only please
 them in proportion to the esteem and praise
 they bring; it is on this account, that one
 may say, that in the heart of all those, who
 have these extraordinary virtues, there is a
 sort of ambition, resembling that of con-
 querors; and though both, in their ways,

have a regard to the conquest of the human race, it is with this difference, that the conquerors will make all mankind subject to them, to render themselves masters of their fortunes and liberty; whereas *those* men, who possess those rare and singular virtues, aim at occupying the first place in their esteem. But the philosophers, who were the first in whom this ambition appeared, judging that it was impossible to gain the esteem of every one, since the greatest part of mankind have but little discernment, and are capricious and unjust, limited the pretension of wisdom to be determined by fair, judicious, equitable, and virtuous men. It is true, having observed the difficulty of obtaining the approbation of many persons, nothing being so different as the tastes of men, and that their tastes have usually a share in their judgments, they thought it would be sufficient for wisdom to have one approver, provided this approver was a man clear and solid, and who was himself respected by all good men. SENECA, who, of all the philosophers, had best known what was most pro-

KNOWING MANKIND. 31

per to satisfy the vanity of man, decided in short, that, his wisdom alone being capable of judging the merit of actions, he likewise was the only approver of himself, and that he had no occasion for the approbation of a stranger. "Wisdom," said he, "does not allow us to be perfectly content, while there is no testimony of our actions; because what could a man wish for better than to give testimony to himself; and be the subject of his own admiration?"

LET us conclude then, that he who acts honestly, unknown to the world, does it oft times with a desire of being approved. "There are," said St. THOMAS, "certain persons, who confine the glory of praise to their own esteem; these persons are certainly very rare, and whilst their actions are performed in private, it often happens, that they flatter themselves that some favourable stroke will bring them to light." Thus it is not honesty, but the praises which attend it, that men regard: it is not, on the other hand, the

bad actions which are disagreeable to them; what makes them uneasy, is the loss of their reputation. It is on this account, that when they are accused of having done a bad action, although they know in their conscience they are guilty, they implore the assistance of their friends, and employ every means of justification.

OF GRATITUDE.

INTEREST alone attracts the whole concern of that infinite number of people, who tread the stage of the world. If any one doubts of this truth, he has nothing to do, but consider closely a benefactor, and a man of gratitude: for though it appears that the first only studies to make his presents in a free manner, and wholly to satisfy his good inclination, and that the other has no more passionate desire in the world, than to testify, on all occasions, how much he acknowledges the favours he has received; we shall find, nevertheless,

KNOWING MANKIND. 33

less, that they have neither generosity nor complaisance, and that the one and the other has equally an eye to self-interest.

To be certain of this, it is necessary, first, to examine the conduct of the benefactor, and to observe, that as soon as he has any employment or place to dispose of, he does not think barely of gratifying some one therewith, but it is still to be considered how he may increase the value of the present, and render it more agreeable; it is for this reason he casts his eye on a man who has not applied to him, who has never done him a piece of service, or in whose favour no person has ever spoken to him. It is certain that this conduct, if well examined, with respect to the benefactor's intention, far from being free and generous, is cunning and self-interested; that the benefactor did not expect to lose his favour, because he did it with so good a grace; and that all the pains he took to render his proceeding honourable, are bonds, by which he has endeavoured to bind the obliged person to him. Whoever would be con-

vinced of this, has nothing to do but observe the surprize, the anger, and the despair of a man, to whom another has been deficient in gratitude ; his secret uneasiness of mind, and the public hatred he shews for him who has not repaid his pretended generosity ; in what colours he paints his ingratitude ; how he tears his character, and inveighs against him, as if he had committed a robbery. But if in the benefits he has conferred, he sought for nothing more than the pleasure of doing good, has not he had that pleasure ? And if he had not intended to reap some advantage from his good actions, why is he afflicted because they have brought him none ? He must then confess, that his despair arises entirely from the disappointment of his deceived hopes, and that he has not received the fruits they promised him. It is easy to conclude two things ; First, that we are very false, and very great hypocrites, to be willing to be thought to have pure souls, and to pretend, that we have no desire for any recompence for the favours we confer ; and that we esteem ourselves sufficiently paid by

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KNOWING MANKIND. 35

the satisfaction and joy which we feel, when we can do another a kindness. Secondly, that there would be no such thing as ingratitude, if this maxim of SENECA was true, "that no man is obliged to recognize the favours done him, but at his own discretion."

LET US now see what are the sentiments of a grateful man, and what the secret principle of his gratitude. The first sentiments which spring in the breast of such a man are so tender, so affecting, and so naturally conceived for the benefactor, that an ungrateful person is often deceived himself, and thinks he has for his benefactor a particular friendship, not only sincere, but really cordial; though all he feels arises entirely from self-love, which makes him, when he has received any favours, recollect the author of them with gratitude, not through love of them, but entirely through consideration of his own interest. The sentiments which succeed those I have just mentioned, are very contrary: for he who has received great benefactions,

factions, fees soon after, that they are not presents, but mere loans. He begins to look on his benefactor as a creditor, who presses him; and all the obligations, as so many chains with which he is fettered. This condition to him is so insupportable, that a desire to free himself, disposes him in private, to scorn the obligations; and his ingratitude would, no doubt, appear at the first meeting, if it were not for fear of ruining all further pretensions to kindness. It is this fear, or rather it is the hope of some greater benefactions, which obliges him to publish the generosity of his benefactor, to attend on him with assiduity, and to shew, on all occasions, that he is particularly attached to him. But if, whilst he was affected with this conduct, any person of power should flatter his hopes with some high employment, he would instantly become a turncoat, and steer his course whither his interest led. He preserves, nevertheless, a fair outside with respect to his benefactor, till the fatal opportunity; when, falling out with the first benefactor, he, without hesitation, takes the side which is
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KNOWING MANKIND. 37

most beneficial to him. It is then that self-interest appears, and that ingratitude, coming to light, shews itself as black as it really is, in spite of all the pains he takes to cover it with a thousand pretences, and to depretiate all the benefactions he has received.

ONE should not be surprised that the heart of man can harbour such scandalous and shameful sentiments. It contains much stranger ones, at least if we believe ARISTOTLE. His thoughts on the subject are these: "Human nature is so abandoned, that they who owe great sums of money, and they who have received great favours, wish for the death of their benefactors, and their creditors." What that philosopher has said, with respect to the evil disposition of the human soul, as it regards benefactors who have heaped favours, will not appear incredible to those who know the height of man's pride, and that all dependences and duties are working towards this weak part.

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WE have said that interest was the principal cause of gratitude; but, as it is not the only one, it is proper to take a view of the others. The first which presents itself, is the fear of the shame which is attached to ingratitude; for since men are become judges of all human actions, they have declared those much more infamous that prejudice or offend themselves, than those which wound the law of God. And since there is no indignation equal to that of those, who are not paid the services they expect from the persons they have befriended, and who behold all their hopes frustrated, it from hence comes to pass, that they have agreed to look on all who thus offend, as men unworthy to live; and that ungrateful people are branded with infamy, whilst sacrilegious and impious men are honoured. These two species of gratitude, which proceed, the one from interest, the other from fear of a tarnished reputation, are the most common.

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THOSE which arise from pride and vanity are not so strong, but still they are not unusual. One sees this sort of gratitude in those, who, having been in favour with princes, take all imaginable pains to recount the favours they have received, and relate the circumstances attending them, apparently to let people see they have a remembrance of the conferred obligations, but, in fact, to shew their own consequence.

THERE are also evil acknowledgments: these are such as one affects to tell of persons, whom one would cunningly accuse. They are expressed in this manner: "I am under infinite obligations to that prince; he has conferred a thousand favours on me; but the greatest of all is, that he has always anticipated my requests." These acknowledgments, thus made before great lords, from whom one must extort complaisance, are generally accusations and reproaches uttered against them. They are sometimes also instructions which

we give them for our own advantage, not for theirs.

THERE are also some vitious and criminal acknowledgments : among those must be ranked the acknowledgments of those, who, having a false idea of friendship, imagine it gives them a right, nay even imposes an obligation, to violate the most holy and indispenfible laws.

LET it suffice to say, that the more we study man, the less can we conceive how he can possibly live in peace with himself. All that we can discover is, that whilst we remark the vices in his virtues, we see, perhaps, virtues in his vices ; and look on what we condemn as knavery and villainy, as a great ingenuity ; or, it may be, contemplate any praise-worthy thing he is possessed of, but never turn our eyes on his injustice, his infidelity, and his ingratitude.

THERE are two sorts of ungrateful people, as there are two sorts of poltroons :
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KNOWING MANKIND 41

the first have it in the highest degree, and turn their backs immediately after the benefits received, without any fear of disgrace; the rest retire by degrees, and to render their shuffling less perceptible, they give it the name of a retreat. One sees most commonly ungrateful people of the first kind in the Country, where men act more naturally and the vices are less disguised: those of the other kind are to be met at Court, where they are well-skilled in disguising the most faulty and blameable actions with the appearance of honor and integrity.

I CANNOT finish this essay better than in these fine words of PLATO. "Unless you inspire the person you oblige with virtue, he will not be duly sensible of your benefactions."

OF FIDELITY.

Of Subjects to Princes.

THE obedience we owe to God and his Church should oblige us to reverence Kings, to have an inviolable attachment to them, and to execute their orders religiously. Nevertheless, where are the Christians that honour God in the persons of Sovereigns, that are faithful to them to discharge an obligation of conscience, and obey their commands with the same respect and exactness, as if they had received them from God himself? Is it not apparent the fidelity one has for Princes is, in the greatest number of those who pay their court to them, only a desire and expectation of their favour; that the zeal they have for the service of the King is redoubled when they receive any recompence for it; that it lessens when they are heated with

with contempt, and that they withdraw themselves entirely, as soon as they see an opportunity of bettering their fortune? This is the reason that in all the connections at Court, there are so many people who form parties, and endeavour to put themselves in a condition to wrest by treasonable practices, the offices and posts which they have been refused, and of which they have always thought themselves deserving. What is this fidelity in others, but a fear of the pains and punishments which Kings inflict on those who dare to violate it by forming factions or cabals against their states, or conspiracies against their persons?—What proves it is, that the Princes who have the greatest aversion to shed human blood, sometimes do not spare that of the most illustrious personages in their kingdom, to keep others to their duty by examples of their justice. The fidelity of men of solidity and understanding, does it not come from the knowledge they have of the power of kings, and from a persuasion that the thoughts of destroying them are not only impious but vain? For they know
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that the troops which kings keep for their body guard, form a particular part of the army, and are always at hand to suppress seditions, so as not to give the disturbers time to consummate their designs, or to prepare for war. They are sensible likewise that kings dispense all sorts of favours, fortunes, honour, dignities, which people are ever ardently gaping after, so that they have always in their hands the infallible means of making those who have served return to their obedience; that is, those who have rather done it to accommodate their affairs than through a spirit of rebellion. They know, in short, that the greater number of those subjects, who have been silly enough to vie with their sovereign, have ended unhappily, either grown old in prison, or have, together with their families, passed their days in a strange country. Is it not else easy to observe that such folks, who are content with their condition and have no other passion than that of tasting the sweets of life, have but an interested fidelity? For as to them war is a scourge; whereas numbers wish for it to acquire glory,

KNOWING MANKIND. 45

ry, or to procure other advantages. They are much attached to the king, because he watches continually over the kingdom, and prevents either domestic or foreign enemies from disturbing their tranquillity ; and they look on him as the tutelar God of their happiness: *Deus nobis hæc otia fecit.* Can one have any other opinion of those, who, being the kings domesticks, and having the first charge of the household, cannot fail in their fidelity, without forfeiting their fortune ; and can one believe their fidelity is sincere and truly virtuous ? What idea must one form likewise of the fidelity of those great politicians, who, in time of civil commotions, return to their respective governments to wait there, till fortune declares herself, and then join the party she favours ; at the same time affecting such a conduct as may induce the court to think they have not joined the factions, and to oblige it to offer them some considerable post ? In short, is the fidelity of mankind in general, any thing more than a facility they have of remaining in the condition in which they found themselves,

or in which they by chance were left? And as they have no less facility to leave it if solicited, is it not true that they are always equally disposed, to persevere in obedience, or to withdraw from it; and that their fidelity depends entirely on temporary circumstances, ever liable to be changed as the situation of affairs shall vary?

OF FIDELITY

In keeping a Secret.

THE confidence of princes is not so difficult to be gained as is generally imagined; for, besides that their leisure puts them under a continual necessity of conversing, their heart is sensible and impatient, and their sentiments are much more lively and impetuous, than those of the rest of mankind. As they have therefore vast trouble in containing them, so they have double advantage in communicating them, and the power of relating all their affairs

KNOWING MANKIND. 47

to those who do not abuse their confidence. 'Tis on this account they love those who are remarkable for taciturnity, and favour them on all occasions, conferring on them extraordinary honours; and 'tis through the opinion they have, that the persons who pass for silent are so in fact, that they set an esteem on those persons, and not through a true estimation of their fidelity. They would be excusable not to esteem fidelity, if they knew the motives of it in those whom they experience the most faithful; and they would not set so high a value on their confidence, if they knew that there is nothing so rare as to find men who inviolably keep a secret without communicating it to any one; for since the persons who have their secrets in their disposal, either employ them to satisfy the curiosity of an idle lady, to rouse her spirits, and draw her out of the melancholy mood into which inactivity has thrown her, or perhaps by that means oblige a man who has a considerable place at court, and to whom it is agreeable, and of use to know all that passes.— Yes, but are not these people soon discovered?

vered? No, for they never tell these important matters confided to them but to persons who cannot offend, and that, after having taken all possible precautions. In a word, these are not weak people, who have not power to keep what has been told them in the utmost confidence, nor so hair-brained that they would run to reveal it to every person indifferently; these are judicious infidels, and prudent dispensers of secrets. But if there are men to be found who keep secrets so religiously as to make a scruple of discovering them to their most intimate friends, this arises only from reasons which regard their interest, the chief of which is, that fidelity is an honest way of making one's fortune.

But although all men are interested, yet they are not all so in the same manner; for there are some in whom the love of riches is the reigning passion, and there are others much more affected by a desire of esteem and reputation than of fortune; from whence it happens that this sett of people will not procure one by prostitutions of their

KNOWING MANKIND. 49

their honour or by any base means, and will only use honourable methods to establish it.

THE second reason is, that it is an agreeable way ; nothing being able to gratify a vain man in a higher degree, than to have to himself the sole confidence of the Prince, and to have frequent conferences with him in his cabinet, whilst all the rest of the world are excluded.

THE third reason is, that it is a pretty certain method : for it is hardly possible not to contribute to the advancement of a man to whom one communicates all his pleasures and afflictions, and to whom one trusts his life, his honour, and his liberty.

THE last reason is, the fear of being disesteem'd, and depriv'd of all the advantages of society : for those people who relate the things which have been told in secrecy, and on whose discretion there can be no reliance, are all on a very bad footing with the world.

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OF SINCERITY.

WHAT are the ends or views of a sincere man ? The first is, to oblige his friends, and all with whom he has any commerce, to speak to him with sincerity, and to have nothing to conceal from him, to the end that he may know the truth of their sentiments, their inclinations, their tastes, their connexions in the world ; and that he may truly know all that passes, that is to say, all their most secret and curious adventures and histories : so that curiosity is the principal cause of sincerity. The second intention of sincere people is, that one should speak truth to them ; this they wish not thro' a love of truth, or a dislike to falsity and lies, but thro' fear of the shame of being duped. Sincere folks intend, in the third place, to remove from them all suspicion of double-dealing and knavery ; for, as they see that knavery irreparably ruins the reputation, they conceive a great aversion for it, and look on sincerity as a virtue capable of gaining

KNOWING MANKIND. 51

gaining them esteem, and of putting them on an honourable footing; they expect likewise to acquire the favour of the world, by the frankness of their proceedings, and by the sincerity of their words; and they are not deceiv'd in their expectations: for, by the same reason that people shun false and dissembling men, they love and seek for those who are sincere; they are even favourable to their advancement, and serve them willingly on all occasions which offer. Thus this is one of the views of these sincere folks: for they are not content that their sincerity gains them the esteem and friendship of mankind, they will also have it subservient to their interest. In short, we profess sincerity that confidence may be placed in us, and that faith may be given to our words; for nothing flatters our vanity so much as that authority which our words acquire from the opinion of our sincerity. One may see at Court, even among the foremost in intrigues, men who take upon them a sincere air, which they endeavour to make as natural as possible, and accommodate to this air the tone of their

voice and their manner of action. They affect to have an open countenance and simplicity of manners, to meet faith from those with whom they have connexions. This sort of ideal sincerity is found among Prime Ministers, among men of business, among merchants, and in general among all public persons. So skilful are they, they conceal their designs to make people believe them and confide in them; and this gives them an opportunity of gratifying their inclinations and their interests contrary to their engagements, thro' the confidence it has given them, that their actions will always have a good construction put on them. There is a sort of sincerity, which arises from the force of self-love; it is met with in plain home-spun people, who make known on all occasions the sincerity of their sentiments, because they have neither power nor address to conceal them: so that whereas those who are skill'd speak and conduct themselves in such a manner that their interest seems to be overlook'd by them, these simple people discover the motives of their speech and actions, because
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KNOWING MANKIND. 53

the violence of their self-love gets the better of and betrays them. Besides all these species of sincerity of which we have spoken, there is one which follows the disposition, and may bear the appellation of natural sincerity; "for there is," says ARISTOTLE, "the force of the temper, that is to say, "of the dispositions and inclinations, to "exercise certain virtues."

OF OFFICIOUS VIRTUE.

AMONGST the numerous families of the world, and especially those of Grandees, there are certain persons who exercise a virtue of a particular species, which may be call'd an officious virtue; for they do not care apparently to have any share in their confidence, and only seem to be near them in order to confer some favour on all their domesticks, to excuse their faults, to conceal their defects, and to make their services and good qualities be regarded. Al-

tho' those persons who possess the esteem of Grandees appear to have no design of gaining any other advantage from their favour than rendering it useful to their Domesticks, they have nevertheless three grand and secret expectations. The first is, to disturb the envy which is always attached to prosperity, which is a vain and silly project; for nothing is so difficult as to cure those who are tormented with that passion, and all that is possible to be effected is to stop their public murmurs: The reason is, that all preferments give rise to, kindle, and excite envy; and when it is once provok'd, be the conduct of the favourite ever so prudent, so modest, and obliging, it is not capable of appeasing it. Their second design is, that what they lend should be return'd, and that all the Domesticks should agree to speak well of them as they have done of all the Domesticks; which is an expectation much less judicious than the former, and which manifestly proceeds from their little acquaintance with the inclinations of mankind; for they have a natural malignity, which cannot be weeded from

KNOWING MANKIND 55

from the heart, which prevents their being ever dispos'd to be truly favourable to those who treat them well; so that, if men are so opposite to each other, it is entirely useless for us to endeavour to engage them to enter sincerely into our interest; for by what art can a man, who is well in the graces of a Prince, put all his Domesticks in such a situation that they will conspire to preserve him in that favour? They will speak to his advantage in his presence and that of the world; but as they are secretly offended at the preference which the Prince gives him in his esteem, will they be always faithful to him, especially when they see an opportunity of establishing themselves on his downfall? It is on this account that it is impossible to be certain. But the chief and most common intention of these officious men is to oblige the Domesticks, for whom they are never weary of procuring favours, to serve them with an equal ardour on those occasions which they have to make use of them for their own interest; for they who have the ear of Princes and great men hint thro' others what they aim

at, in order to sound them and discover their dispositions, or because modesty obliges them to speak timorously, for their own interests. This last intent is as frivolous as the rest; and they too often prove that they are abus'd, when they have relied on the gratitude of men; for when an opportunity offers that they expect to reap some advantage from their good offices, they see that they are deserted, or that their industry is represented in a careless indifferent manner; this is the reason why they throw out those bitter invectives and outrageous reproaches against those who have so shamefully fail'd in their duty: but whilst they thus reproach their ingratitude and infidelity, they do not observe that they betray themselves; and that they plainly shew that they have not a benevolent disposition; for they who have a disposition truly benevolent find their recompence and satisfaction in the pains they take for the benefit of others, and never think of receiving any profit from their good actions.

KNOWING MANKIND. 57

OF GOODNESS.

MAN is so depraved that he cannot bear the good qualities of others, either natural or acquir'd, corporal or spiritual: he envies their shape, their mien, their vigour, their merit. He is not only indifferent as to others in proportion as they are more or less serviceable by contributing to his glory or his pleasure, or serving his interest; but he is their implacable enemy as soon as they oppose his desires; and the violence of his self-love is such, that he is always ready to render them miserable, nay even to destroy them, if he cannot attain to a completion of his wishes otherwise than by their ruin and destruction. This suppos'd, how can one imagine that he intends sincerely doing good to others, and contributing to the fortune, I do not mean of persons who are indifferent to him, but those who are allied to him, whom one may compare to a great tree, which naturally attracts all the moisture to itself, and which is fit for nothing

but to destroy the neighbouring trees: on the contrary, is it not manifest that those who profess being good seem to leave themselves, whilst they employ their time and their interest to make the affairs of others succeed? They return, however, always to themselves, and, like trees, seem never to launch out, but to grow greater, to spread and to rise: so that one may say goodness is a sort of delusion man makes use of to make his concern appear to be abroad, tho' it always remains at home. Let us conclude then that goodness is a chimerical virtue, because those who pique themselves on goodness, and affect to give proofs of it in all the occurrences of life, have generally great reasons. There are many species of goodness, but one meets with two sorts of it in particular at Court. The first is that of those persons extraordinarily ambitious, who, having form'd great schemes for advancing their fortune, offer themselves to all those to whom they can be of service, and give themselves, or rather lend themselves, to every one, to the intent that every one may endeavour to
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KNOWING MANKIND. 59

serve them, and that they may obtain the office or place they aim at when it shall become vacant, and the King shall think fit to fill it. The second kind is that of those people of quality, who, finding themselves loaded with fortune and honours, desire nothing else to make them perfectly happy, than public approbation, and therefore study to oblige all those who are recommended to their protection, and all those whom they behold embarrass'd in their affairs, to the end that they may be esteem'd, and belov'd by every one.

OF HUMILITY.

PRIDE is the master of man ; it is the cause of the greatest part of his interior emotions and of his actions. It is remark'd also, not without astonishment, that it is equally the cause of his agitations and of his repose ; and that, after having excited uneasiness in his soul, by a miraculous power, it instantly calms it. Certainly, whilst delicacy renders

a man sensible of an injury, pride immediately kindles his anger, and makes him have recourse to arms to satisfy his resentment; and lest his rage and transport should dishonour him, pride appeases him, and re-establishes him in his first situation. This is not all; pride is humanly invincible, and there is no condition, however vile, which can destroy it, no shameful adventure which can humble it, no power which can subject it; in short, a proud man may be trod under foot, but never subdued. So that, if pride governs man, and disposes him in such a manner that he can never be subjected, it is easy to conclude that when a man despises himself, or blames himself, his words betray his sentiments; that every time he humbles himself before others, 'tis to exalt himself above them; and that he would never act so contrary to his natural pride and haughtiness, if he did not know that nothing is more likely to raise him than voluntary humiliations. There are many marks which may convince us that the humility of those who only pretend to it, is but dissimulation. The first is, that at the same
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time that they seem to have a contempt for themselves, they observe diligently the method one makes use of with respect to them; they require rigorously that people should render them every the minutest part of respect they owe them, and take revenge for the least injury done them. The second mark is, there are some who are submissive to persons useful to their interest, and haughty to others. "SYLLA," says PLUTARCH, "humbled himself to those with whom he had business; but contrived to be adored by those who made application to him." The third is, that they among those who willingly take the lowest places at entertainments and assemblies, only act in this manner, with respect to the persons above whom they might sit without dispute, because they are jealous of keeping their rank among their equals, and have a vast uneasiness in submitting to those whose quality is higher than theirs. The fourth is, that amongst the false humblers, who speak such things of themselves as are capable of making them disesteem'd, who own that they commit faults, and that they

they have defects and evil inclinations, there is not one of them who confesses his foibles with a design of amending them; they all do it to discharge themselves of that blame which is the consequence of them, and to lessen the shame they have merited; and it is for this purpose that some women avow their Coquetry, that they may be able to carry it on with the greater liberty and less confusion. As to faults, there is not one of them who accuses himself of any essential ones, as of being devoid of honour and honesty, and of lying and cheating: they only accuse themselves of being hasty, negligent, idle, and of having such faults as do not affect the reputation. They also acknowledge that they are subject to those faults to which the most perfect are liable, of giving foolish answers, and of being hurried away imprudently on certain occasions; but nobody confesses that he has robbed or betrayed his friend.

OF MODESTY.

THERE is nothing with which a man is so offended as assurance; for, as all those appear ridiculous, who, instead of following the fashion, dress after a particular fancy of their own, entirely whimsical, so those are look'd on as strange men, whose behaviour is entirely opposite to the manners and customs of other men. We are not only offended, but extremely angry, at the words and methods made use of by barefac'd and impudent people, because the respect we think due to us, is violated by those who behave thus before us. 'Tis on this account we have so much difficulty in bearing this sort of people, who being decried, because they have neither honour, faith, nor honesty, carry a high head, and those women who, living without any regard to their reputation, present themselves impudently in all companies: and 'tis for the contrary reason that we are charm'd at the modesty of those honest women, who,

being able to appear every where with confidence, carry with them every where a sort of diffidence which commands respect. In short, modesty has been favour'd on account of the false consequences which have been drawn, that since impudence is a vice, modesty must of course be a virtue, and this consequence has been drawn because assurance was esteem'd to be a vice distinguish'd and different from all other vices; whereas it is, to speak right, but the consummation of vice, which, breaking forth, overlooks all the rules and laws of complaisance. These are the true causes of the idea one has of modesty, and of the persuasion people entertain, in spite of the reasons which are about to be represented, that the blush which appears in the faces of those detected in a fault, is a shame for having fallen therein. The first reason which proves that it is not at the baseness of the vicious actions that people blush is, that they commit them in private, without any shame, though ever so shameful and black. The second, that there is no man who blushes [when he has no witnesses but the accomplices

KNOWING MANKIND. 65

plices of his crime. The third, that, if shame sprang from the deformity of bad actions, it would be more or less great in proportion to the degree of criminality in actions : which is apparently false, since extortion and rapine occasion no sort of confusion in the guilty person, or at least much less than larcenies ; and that, moreover, nobody is ashamed of his pride, his ambition, and other vices of the soul. The fourth reason is, that a man would be more ashamed, in proportion as he became more wicked, and acted more criminally. And the last, that we should be equally confounded at our misbehaviour, whether before fools or wise-men, friends or strangers, which is contrary to the experience of all the world.

WHAT then is the cause of the blushes, which overspread the faces of those who commit any bad action in the presence of others ; it is the fear of falling into contempt, which, disquieting the soul of those who commit any considerable fault, acts as

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an alterative upon the body, and suddenly inflames their face.

It may be said on the other side that it is not impossible, to find people who blush at faults they commit unknown to the world; and in fact it is not impossible: but it should not be from thence concluded that it is the crimes they have committed, which occasion those blushes, because these sort of people are ashamed of themselves, and esteem themselves so much that they are sorry to forfeit their own approbation. The fear of disgrace is not however the sole cause of shame; and it is certain that ARISTOTLE, in refining it, has confined it too much, since children and servants blush through fear of chastisement and reprimands, whilst they little regard what their masters think of them. Shame is likewise sometimes the cause of an emotion that causes joy, as is apparent in men who blush when praised; which is attributed, with very little reason, to their modesty and the pain they feel in receiving praises; I say with very little reason, because there is

KNOWING MANKIND. 67

is no likelihood that praises should displease vain men; and that there is much more reason to attribute their blushes to the joy they feel from those praises, or at least to the embarrassment they ly under, which prevents them from knowing what face they wear whilst they receive those commendations. It is the same with young women, who blush when the men approach them and flatter them; for their blushes, which one takes for a mark of their modesty and virtue, are an almost infallible proof of their coquettish humour, and of the joy that their hearts are elated with, at finding what they naturally look for.

THEY who know the sympathy that is between the heart and the face, by means of the nerves, will easily conceive that, as soon as the heart is affected, its emotions must necessarily appear in the face. But if these proofs do not seem strong enough to destroy the opinion that the shame which makes both young and old persons blush, is a mark of good hearts, and are not sufficient to convince, that this blushing
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is a very equivocal sign; let them only recollect that SYLLA blushed as much as POMPEY; and that they see people, whose inclinations are very depraved, who are oftener and more easily put to the blush than wise and virtuous persons. The principle which produces shame is a secret pride, and a sort of pride which makes man unjust, and which disposes him in such a manner, that, commit what crime he will, he is no ways confounded at it; nor at being found fault with or disesteemed; a sort of pride, which blinds him in such a manner, that, forgetting he is man, he will be thought incapable of committing the least fault; which is what affects those who blush at the slightest faults, such as mistakes in words, and the most common ones, although they know well that every one will excuse them, and that they should be excused; a sort of pride which gives them so great a desire of being approved in every action, that the least fear of disapprobation causes a blush. From thence it comes to pass, that people blush through

KNOWING MANKIND. 69

through apprehensions of not executing honourably what they undertake, though of ever so little importance; and that the young girls, who enter into life, blush even for nothing; for they not only blush, least their countenance should not be adjusted properly; they also blush if one looks at them, addresses them, or makes them do the least thing whatsoever: in short, a pride which makes a man blush for the meanness of his birth, for his servitude, for his poverty, and other like things, which in truth are not shameful, and even for the intreaties he offers for the success of his affairs; because by those intreaties he submits to others, and puts himself in a state of dependence.

OF GOOD-NATURE.

THE word good-nature gives us at once the idea of a man meek, merciful, always ready to do good, and incapable of doing mischief to any one in the world;
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and a man easy, weak, and so patient, that his mildness gives his enemies assurance to rob him of his fortune, to despise him, and do him every sort of injury : so that when a person calls another good-natured, it is doubtful if he gives him that epithet with design to praise or ridicule him.

To give then a true definition of good-nature, we must, according to the words of a prophet, distinguish what he has valuable, from what he has contemptible, and examine both separately, which I am now about to do. We honour the Christians, who are stripped of their fortunes, and have suffered the greatest outrages, rather than abandon their faith. Why is it, on the other hand, that we have a vile opinion of those good-natured people, who suffer their estates to be kept from them, and allow themselves to be trod under foot ; why so, if it is not that we consider the latter as pusillanimous cowards, who have neither courage nor industry to defend themselves, and to exact justice ? Yet we look on the
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KNOWING MANKIND. 71

former as martyrs, and men whom the Holy Ghost has animated. We must acknowledge then, that though this second sort of good-natured people imitate the manners of the best Christians; and tho', like them, they do not take amiss the indignities offered them, they are, nevertheless, not unjustly despised; and of consequence there is a species of good-nature base and contemptible. This is what is bad in good-nature. Let us now see if the good, of which it is composed, is truly good; if the benevolence, which makes good-natured men avoid giving offence to any one, and disposes them to give all the pleasure possible, and grant all the favours demanded of them; if this quality, I say, is a goodness which merits esteem. It must be confessed, to be sure, that the greatest number of good-natured people act naturally, and that their good-nature is sincere; for as good-natured people must always wear the same appearance, if they were not really so, and if they were obliged to affect it, nobody would condemn himself

himself for life to act that part. Certainly, it is not with those who practise good-nature, as with those who pique themselves on friendship, gravity, and many other virtues; 'tis only when grave people appear in public, that they compose their countenances; when in private, they do not give themselves that trouble. The best friends are not friends to every one, nor are they oblig'd to give testimonies of friendship to those, who repay them with ingratitude; but there is neither time, reason, nor place, which dispenses with good-nature, and one never exercises it more a-propos, than when there is just cause to deny it.

THE second proof, that the good-nature of which we speak is neither feign'd nor studied, is drawn from the nature of man, who is so sensible, so impatient, and so revengeful, that he does himself a violence every time he is ill-us'd, if he takes the part of goodness, mildness and patience. Besides, as he is naturally hasty and turbulent, 'tis impossible that he could always

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KNOWING MANKIND. 73

quer his passions. 'Tis therefore plain, that they who have a fund of goodness, of meekness, and sufferance, to supply all occasions, are under no constraint, nor affect good-nature. Good nature, then, is almost always sincere; but it does not therefore follow, that it is virtuous; for, as ARISTOTLE observes, “to be virtuous, we must do good thro’ choice, and must not do it merely because it is dictated by our natural inclinations.” Besides, there are faults in the constitution, which often give rise to virtues: so that as sometimes the excessive coldness of the constitution is the principal cause, not to say the only one, of the virtue of women; in the same manner the effeminacy of the constitution of good-natur’d people, is the sole cause of their good-nature. I said that good-nature is generally sincere, because it is not always so; and there are some persons in whom it is concerted; for there are people, who, perceiving that they have so many faults and disagreeable defects as can scarce be born, profess to be good-natur’d, to deliver themselves from the

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torments and persecutions they meet with. There are others of a more exalted species, who have no faults which merit contempt; but, having no talent which may make them conspicuous, take good-nature as an office which gives them some rank in the society to which they belong. Princes, who do not think themselves valiant enough to acquire reputation by arms, nor clever enough to be esteem'd for the government of their states, endeavour to appear good-natur'd, that they may have one quality at least to recommend them to the esteem of the vulgar. Some of them use mildness and indulgence towards their subjects, with the sole design of making themselves agreeable, and gaining their affection. In short, those who succeed cruel and overbearing Princes are mild and easy, to the end that their subjects may be happy under their dominion, and bless their reign. Good-nature is then a false virtue, or a mean quality, which is never found but in wretches as poor and as miserable as itself.

OF INDULGENCE.

IF any one doubts that learning has a share in the production of virtues and virtuous actions, there is no more infallible method of convincing him, than to make him consider indulgence; since science is manifestly the source and the soul of that amiable virtue. In fact, as our acquaintances encrease, we become more mild, and more indulgent. The faults and defects of those with whom we live, give us less pain; and we learn that, if our reason arrived at its perfection, we might attain to a sort of insensibility, with regard to the offences committed against us, even those which cause the greatest uneasiness. What makes indulgence perfect in a man of clear understanding is, that his light of reason makes him penetrate into the most secret causes of faults and transports of men, and makes him find an excuse for an infinity of actions, which would otherwise have appeared to him very offensive and very wicked;

wicked; he sees, for instance, that he is offended at what has been said to him on some occasions, in words which he has looked upon as words of contempt, because unacquainted with the intention, or the little sense of those who said it; and that he has often attributed to malice, what has been done by chance, and without any design. As for defects of the body, he would think he did injustice, if he reproached those who laboured under them, and upbraided them with the faults of nature: he treats in like manner the defects of understanding; and as he is not offended at the blindness of the body, neither is he piqued at stupidity, which he considers as the blindness of the soul. But people of understanding, not only apprehend that they should not be displeased with the natural imperfections and defects of others; but are likewise convinced, that they ought to bear, without uneasiness, the true subjects of offence; such as the wounds, which envious backbiters give their character and reputation by slanderous lies,

KNOWING MANKIND. 77

lies, and false accusations; and though these are the most pungent and sensible offences that can be given, yet a man who has acquired the perfection of indulgence, is not touched at them: he looks on them, like SOCRATES, as the effects of a bad education, for which one is not blameable; or a levity, or some natural and unsurmountable malignity. He beholds, with an eye equally calm, the oppositions of those who oppose his measures; he puts himself in their place; he enters into their interests, their sentiments, and even their thoughts; and discovers that they thwart him only on account of their connexions of interest and friendship with others; or resentment for some injury they think they have received from him.

WITH all these recommendations, it would be difficult to find a falser virtue, or one more politic and interested, than human indulgence: it is in us but a fear of losing those who offend us by their indiscretion, or by their violent temper; be-

cause they are of use to us in our affairs, or, by the agreeableness of their conversation, contribute to our diversion; we further bear with them, that we may not lose the reward of services we have rendered, or lest we should be branded with the epithets of quarrelsome or affected. Human indulgence is also sometimes an habitual cowardliness, which causes certain persons to excuse or dissemble whatever has been said disagreeable to them, that they should not be under necessity of having satisfaction for the affront. It is likewise a liberty we choose to have of abusing others, and which we cannot take, without allowing them the same liberty with us.

WHAT has been said, shews that human indulgence is not a true virtue; but what indubitably proves this point is, that those who practise it, as mild and passive as they seem, are in their soul offended at every such disagreeable discourse and proceeding, and have such vast pain in concealing their impatience and chagrin, that they

KNOWING MANKIND. 79

they would soon discover them, if not restrained by the considerations abovementioned.

OF PITY.

THEY who act by the emotions of a pity merely human, and open their purses, to anticipate the necessity of one that is fallen into poverty; or who save from prison a debtor, persecuted by his creditors; or who shew themselves officious and obliging to every one of their neighbours, whom they see loaded with grief and misfortunes; or who endeavour to give some comfort to a father or mother afflicted at the death of an only child: these people, I say, though their actions carry the appearance of a true compassion for the afflictions and miseries of their neighbours; they have, nevertheless, compassion only on themselves; they serve themselves, and comfort themselves, in the persons of others, and dry up their own tears in the eyes of their relations and friends.

THESE are people, who see that, by the uncertainty of human affairs, the richest are in a little time impoverished by the misfortunes which befall them; that the stoutest and healthiest, when they are least apprehensive of it, are attacked with the most tedious and fatal disorders; and that the happiest become often the subjects of the hatred of fortune, take all the care they can of the unfortunate, that the same care may be taken of themselves, if their fortunes or health should be impaired; so that they may prevent all their wants, and may procure in advance all the assistance imaginable. Thus pity is a sentiment secretly self-interested; it is an habitual foresight, and may well be called the providence of self-love. But if any one wants to be convinced of the truth of what I advance, let him observe that pity is seldom found in those who are loaded with fortune and honours, and whose condition is so strongly fixed, that nothing is able to hurt it; and in those unfortunates who are so oppressed with misery that they have nothing further

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KNOWING MANKIND. 81

to fear. It is then a just subject of astonishment, that people should look on pity as a virtuous quality : but the surprize must be much greater, if one considers that it has nothing estimable in it, neither in the causes which produce it, nor in the subjects where one generally meets it. Among the causes which produce pity, there are two principal ones ; the first is that which has been mentioned, viz. an excessive self-love, which, obliging man to take a view of the whole course of his life, naturally urges him to seek remedies for all the accidents which may befall him. The second cause of pity is that medley of humours where phlegm predominates ; for moist persons are more liable than others to receive the impressions of objects ; and they cry much easier, because they find satisfaction in crying. From thence it comes to pass that persons of this constitution have not always an equal sensibility ; and there are times, and hours of the day, when they have very little, according as the phlegmatic humour predominates more or less : which is the reason that one cannot rely on

the assistance which is given to neighbours by those whom pure natural compassion instigates. The subjects most susceptible of pity are old people, women and children, who are all weakly and easy to be moved : old folks, because their bodies and their minds are impaired by age ; children, because they act by the impression the objects which affect the senses make on them ; and women, because their sex removes them from all employments which may awaken and keep their courage in exercise, and they are also deprived of all intimacy with those things which fortify the mind : so that when any of these accidents happen, they find themselves without strength or resolution : it is for this reason they pity all whom they see in tribulation, and that they would, as SENECA remarks, break the bars and open all the prisons. But if any one ask how it comes to pass that we have so great a regard for people who are compassionate to the misfortunes of others, and why pity has found a place among the most esteemed qualities, I answer, that a favourable opinion has been conceived of pity

KNOWING MANKIND. 83

pity for the same reason that the Babylonians were persuaded that **BELUS** was a god; for as they had this belief, and rendered him divine honours, because they saw that his statue was an asylum for all animals; so the vulgar, seeing that pity is the refuge of the miserable, have looked on it and honoured it as a divine quality. We approve also of pity by the extreme aversion we have for hard-heartedness, which is a strange quality, and quite opposite to human nature, because it stifles in man all the humane qualities, which seem to join the heart of one to that of others, by rendering him senseless to their affliction and miseries. One may even say that, since hard-heartedness is a vice which hinders men from compassionating each other's misfortunes, it is a praiseworthy thing to feel the mischiefs one is obliged to remedy. But we must stop here; for if we go a step farther, and draw this consequence, that the pity one has for others through self-love is a virtuous quality, we begin to err; for the sentiments which virtue inspire are peaceable, uniform,

and devoid of interest; and on the contrary, natural compassion is an uneasy, unequal, and interested sentiment, whose objects are temporal disgraces and misfortunes.

OF FRIENDSHIP.

THE friendship of two men endued with extraordinary qualities, to define it properly, is a kind of treaty they make, by which they mutually promise to observe every thing estimable in their conduct, and to value it as highly as they think it deserves. Common friendships are but honest intercourses, by which we hope to make many sorts of gain, suitable to our different designs, or rather our different passions. As that of acquiring a fortune is lively and impatient, and as there is a number of people who have none, or at least not enough to support them according to their rank; from thence it comes

KNOWING MANKIND. 85

to pass that we attach ourselves to kings, their favourites and their ministers; and that those who make their court to them take all opportunities, and all methods, of persuading them that they are entirely devoted to them. The passion of pleasure associates and connects young people; and as they do not find it always in the same place, by means of obstacles which oppose, or because they often change it through distaste and weariness, they likewise often change their friends, as ARISTOTLE has remarked. There is a secret ambition, which is a third cause of friendship: it is found in a set of people who apply all their time and attention to some person whose rank is infinitely superior to their own, and whose countenance makes them appear of consequence. There is another sort of ambition, which is much easier known and more usual, by which some people seek to signalize themselves in all the affairs of their friends, to make a noise in the world, and to recommend themselves by their friendship. But men are not only deceived by their passions, which make them consider

der themselves secretly whilst they imagine they serve their friends in a disinterested manner; they are likewise couzened by the dispositions and qualities of their temper, which many mistake for the true inclinations and qualities of friendship; for passionate people, who do every thing violently, imagine, whilst they defend their friend with so much warmth, that it is with the zeal of friendship they are inflamed, whilst it is only their natural heat and passion, which transports them and hurries them on so impetuously. Melancholy people think they love extremely those to whom nothing but caprice and whim have attached them. The women take the effeminacy of their constitution for the tenderness of friendship. In short, those of a sanguine constitution persuade themselves that they have friendship, because they are of a cheerful temper, and have a certain natural gaiety, which disposes them to receive gently all those with whom they are connected in society, and to lend a favourable attention to their requests. From thence it happens that people cannot agree on the
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subject of friendship, and form different ideas of it: for as the greatest part of men love according to the nature of their constitutions, and their friendship is tinged with the particular humour which predominates in them, it is not possible they should have the same thoughts and conceptions of friendship. This is the reason that bilious people, who have a violent and impetuous friendship, are agitated in such a manner, and storm and bluster at the unlucky adventures of their friends; whilst those who are naturally mild, take in the play of friendship the part of lamentations and complaints, and content themselves sometimes with testifying their displeasure by their dejected air and their silence. It is for this same reason these two sorts of friends disapprove of each other. The mild and peaceable sort cannot imagine that friendship consists in noise and fury; nor can the impetuous sort approve of a peaceable friendship, which one only entertains to arrive at others greater and more useful, or to preserve them, or to renew them when almost extinguished; for the world.

world is so solid, and so strongly governed by reason, that those who will succeed are constrained to raise themselves by devices, and maintain themselves there by artifices of various sorts. That on which the honestest are obliged to rely, is dexterously to make it believed they have the confidence of a prince, or access to many persons of quality. There are others, who have been in high life; and, though neither regarded nor liked there, yet boast of having a great number of friends; so that as often as any one of the first rank dies, they never fail to shew they are affected sensibly at the death, and to say they have a great loss.

BEFORE I finish this discourse, I must answer a considerable objection: that is, the proof that PYLADES and ORESTES, PYTHIAS and DAMON, gave of their friendship, when they would stubbornly die for the sake of each other. I shall not endeavour to overthrow this proof, as I might, by insisting on the uncertainty of these examples,

KNOWING MANKIND. 89

amples, the first of which is not supported by the testimony of any historian; or their rareness, which is so great that we have no account of any but those two; because one may allow that a man has offered to die to save his friend, and even that he in fact did die for him, without giving up the opinion one entertains that it is not through true and sincere friendship: for I may affirm that, though it appears that a man gives his life to save that of his friend, it is nevertheless certain that he dies for self-glory; that is, to acquire a sort of glory, that he esteems so much the more as it is very scarce and singular. There are people, says ARISTOTLE, that would much rather do one great and heroic action than many common ones, such as are those who die for their friends. But if one has a difficulty to conceive how a man can consent to suffer death and agree to his own destruction for love of himself, he has nothing to do but think of those who have killed themselves to be looked on by posterity as men of extreme courage and resolution. Let the person in doubt also take
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care that the difficulty he has to comprehend this paradox, does not arise from his considering a sick man as if he was in health. In fact, ambition being one of the most violent diseases man is liable to, it is plain that it can sufficiently change his condition and deprave his taste, to make him prefer the immortal glory which attends a great action to the enjoyment of a long life. It is by this same rule that we should judge of the great proof of friendship which SOCRATES gave ALCIBIADES, when he ceded to him the honour of the victory he gained in Macedonia; and one may reasonably believe that the glory he renounced to leave it to ALCIBIADES returned to him with twice its lustre, and that his heart, delicately ambitious, might relish much better that which a great action merits, and which has no example, than what one acquires by the success of a combat or battle. Let us acknowledge then with ARISTOTLE, that all our friendship should be attributed to self-love as its true foundation, and that the only difference between ordinary friendships, and those of men

KNOWING MANKIND. 91

men of honour, is, that it is private and delicate in this, whereas it is plain and homely in the others. Let us confess likewise and own honestly, that when we resolve to do a piece of service to our most particular friend, it occurs to us when we are thinking that in business, which we foresee, we shall have occasion for him ; or that he will take greater pains to divert us, and to keep us company. Let us confess, I say, that these and many other like motives present themselves to our mind, and that one of them always enters into all the projects and resolutions we make to oblige those we love. In short, I intreat those who are not yet satisfied with the reasons advanced, to reflect on the accidents which happen to the generality of people in the course of human life, and to consider that they but too fully prove that there is no sincere or true friend. Our disgraces and our wants do not render them unfaithful ; they only make us discover what they are : and we learn by woeful experience with how much reason SOCRATES said, “ that a man is
 “ never more busy, than when he is ob-
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“ bliged to examine the account of his
 “ friends.”

OF THE CHASTITY OF WOMEN.

THE violence, the women who love affectionately do themselves, when they are rigid, appears worthy of the admiration of the authors of romances, because they take it for a restraint extremely virtuous. What deceives them, and almost all the world, is, that people respect the effect and not the cause of this rigour: I mean, that the restraint of their passions preserves their honour, which is what they always consider, and never examine the motive that makes them so careful of preserving it, nor whence the power they have over themselves arises. It is impossible but one must discover, that it is not love of their honour that makes them so jealous of it, but a desire of being long loved; for they see they can
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KNOWING MANKIND. 93

be so, no longer than they are esteem'd, and that their compliance with the desires of their gallant, is the fall of their empire. 'Tis not enough to have decry'd the force with which women who have yielded to love, resisted the violence of that passion ; we must take a view of all the species of chaste women whose virtue has been prais'd, and see if we can justly give them that name. The first sort of chaste women, are those ambitious ones, who, being bloated with a secret indignation, because the men have so many ways of signaling themselves, and have the sciences, the arts, dexterity, and valour to recommend them, embrace modesty with the greater zeal, as it appears to be the only means which is open to them for the acquisition of glory. 'Tis for that reason they endeavour to make so great a difference between their behaviour and that of common women ; and, not contenting themselves with being modest, affect a particular sort of chastity, that they may pass for prudes. From thence it happens, that

that when they find themselves inclin'd to gallantry, and some opportunity offers capable of trying them, they make secret efforts to restrain themselves, that they may preserve their rank, and be distinguish'd from the rest of their sex ; These ambitious chastes have a near relation to the Vestals : these vow'd their virginity to false Gods, and those vow their chastity and modesty to glory, which is one of the false divinities the world adores. The second kind of modest women, are those who are chaste thro' pride, and because they do not imagine any thing worthy of them : 'tis thro' this haughty disposition, they keep themselves aloof from intrigues, and spurn at the amusements that generally employ the female sex ; one may say, that their modesty springs from the persuasion they have of the excellence of their merit, and that a fear of lessening its worth makes them virtuous. Indolence and timorousness form a third sort of chaste women : those who engage in gallantry are oblig'd to use so much circumspection and precaution, and to exercise so many faints, finesses, and artifices,

KNOWING MANKIND. 95

tifices, that this fatigue seems insupportable to the greater part of those women who are naturally indolent: they fear likewise the anger of a mother, the rage of a husband, the revolt of their family, and the uproar of the world; and all these together persuade them that it is much less disagreeable to adhere to their duty, than to comply with a passion, which condemns the women who submit to it, to so much care, anxiety and uneasiness. In short, their happiness of constitution is almost the sole cause of the modesty of a great number of women, especially of those whose minds are inactive, and who are guided by their natural inclinations.

OF DISINTERESTEDNESS.

THE people who form the disinterested part of mankind are not among the number of those who deceive others,

others, for they are deceiv'd themselves; there are those cunning folks, who think nothing more likely to promote their ends, than to be thought disinterested. Let us observe the stratagems some of them make use of, who, having born all the fatigues and hazards of a party, and refus'd a long time to be compris'd in a treaty, have craftily charg'd one of their nearest friends to bring about an accomodation, with a full caution to break off all measures, if he could not obtain for them large sums of money, or some considerable places. Others say, that for their part they would not accept of any-thing, was it not that, all of their party having receiv'd posts or gratuities, it would redound to their dishonour not to receive the like satisfaction. In short, others find themselves forc'd by their friends, or commanded by court, to accept an employment, which they have always secretly with'd. It is then with these false appearances of those seeming disinterested folks, as with those of wicked angels who transform themselves into angels

KNOWING MANKIND. 97

angels of light : that they may be discovered somewhere. Let us come to the reasons which oblige them to put themselves on the footing of disinterested people. The first is, the desire of making the world imagine that they have pure souls, and to give a good impression in their favour: which arises from this, that pride, which continually excites men to make themselves esteem'd, forces those who have good qualities to set them forth to view, and to make it imagin'd that they have extraordinary ones, amongst which there is none more valuable nor more rare than that of disinterestedness. The second is, disinterestedness is the most honourable means which can be taken to promote one's interest; and this means is so much the more likely to succeed, as it is so singular; for singularity gives things a great value. The third reason is, the knowlege they have of the aversion the world entertains for interested people; and those who live in a society with so little regard for the good of others, as if they were only born for themselves, who never take part in the

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most important affairs of their friends, and who are insensible to the most pressing necessities of their relations ; for, as every one does them justice, in being as far detached from them as they are from others, and not interesting themselves in their promotion, and as they are abandon'd to all the disgraces they have brought on themselves, this experience makes certain people, who observe that nothing is more advantageous to their reputation and affairs than to pass for disinterested men, study to give all who have any dealing with them this opinion of their behaviour. But as it is a known truth, that all men in general have such a regard to their interest, that there is scarce a less possibility of renouncing it than of defeating nature, how do those people who boast of being disinterested find faith in the eyes of the world ? The reason is this : the greatest part are not acquainted with this truth, that because they see people are persuaded of it, and that they do not derive this imagination from a thorough knowledge of the inclinations of men, 'tis therefore they are easily

KNOWING MANKIND. 99

ly attach'd to those who appear disinterested. Hence also proceeds this address they use, of exhibiting some disinterested actions in the presence of men of consequence, whose testimony is sufficient to establish that opinion in the world: for they know that at court, and in all particular societies, there are men, who have dominion over the minds, and whose sentiments are the guide of the sentiments and thoughts of the rest: In short, it sometimes happens that as disinterestedness is so rare, the desire we have of seeing it helps to strengthen our belief, that there are some men endued with that quality.

OF THE LOVE OF TRUTH.

THERE is nothing so great as truth; and it is with reason that it's research is pointed out to us in the scripture, as the chief of our duties, and its possession as the greatest acquisition we

can make : but we must seek for it in a manner worthy of it ; and 'tis thro' love of it, and not thro' regard for our interest, we should esteem it. 'Tis however, what all those fail in, who seek for it and love it with an human affection : for it is not to relish truth, nor to make a proper use of it, that they so ardently desire to be acquainted with it, but much rather to satisfy their curiosity ; that is to say, to follow the emotions of a violent and impatient passion, which regards not its beauty and utility, nor has any other end than that of self-satisfaction. That is the first motive that instigates man to the pursuit of truth.

THE second is an evil disposition : such is the disposition of the greatest number of men who are continually informing themselves of the bad and blameable actions of others, not thro' design of amending their behaviour, but of rejoicing and railing at it.

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KNOWING MANKIND. 101

THE third is that proud disposition, by which the Philosophers were prompted to study the knowlege of God, that they might esteem themselves the more for it, and despise all those who had not made this important discovery : for whereas this knowlege should have induc'd them to glorify God, to submit themselves to him, and to live according to his laws, it help'd only to puff up their hearts : “ and their “ light,” says Saint PAUL, “ served only to lead them astray.”

THE fourth is a disposition of self-love, with which certain persons take upon them the defence of a truth of which they are persuaded ; for they defend it with zeal and warmth, in appearance, to prevent its being cover'd with obscurity, and lest any one should defeat it thro' the secret attachment he has to his own opinion. 'Tis of this sort of people that Saint AUGUSTINE speaks in talking to God : “ They defend their “ own truth, and not thine :” that is to say, they defend it, not to support the cause

of God, but for the sake of the interest they have in it, and as a benefit which appertains to them.

THE fifth is a vain disposition, which is common to most learned men, by which they condemn themselves to long study, and inform themselves not only in curious truths, but the most consequential ones, with the sole view of shewing their knowledge. The disposition of those who are true in their words, is in some a secret ambition they have that every one should credit what they say, to the end that by such means they may put themselves not only on the footing of honourable but also valuable : 'Tis in others a desire of shewing a great soul, because those who are addicted to lying, have generally a base one : 'Tis a removal of falshood, not because it is opposite to truth, but because it is dishonourable, and liars are banish'd from honest societies, and despis'd by the most indulgent. The liberty of speaking the truth on all occasions, and before all sorts
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KNOWING MANKIND. 103

of people, is found in certain haughty men, who are above self-interest, lest they should be under any sort of restraint: this proud disposition is however that of the great spirit of an ARISTOTLE, that is to say, of a man excellently virtuous. "The man of spirit," said he, "speaks with liberty, because he regards no one, and will never be hinder'd from speaking the truth by any consideration whatsoever."

OF THE VIRTUES WHICH MAY
BE RANK'D UNDER FORCE.

OF POWER OVER ONE'S SELF.

THERE is no Preceptor, however wise and capable in imagination, which is so proper to correct a man as his pride. 'Tis that which makes him perceive that he debases the dignity of his nature, when he abandons himself to voluptuousness ; that he loses his reason, when he suffers himself to be hurry'd away by the violence of rage ; and that he discovers the weakness of his soul, when he allows himself to be dejected with affliction. It seems likewise that pride, not contented with preventing his giving way to those passions which dishonour him, even inspires him with a secret force, which prevents them from rising, and renders certain men so much masters of themselves and their sentiments, that

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KNOWING MANKIND. 105

no adventures, however melancholy or surprising, can affect them. This declaration which I make, that 'tis pride which gives great men and heroes that power which they have over their conduct, dispenses with the obligation I might lay under of shewing that their discretion is a false prudence : all that I need add is, that it is not pride alone, but the greatness of their pride, which renders them masters of themselves : for as they see that they are honour'd with the rank of demigods by means of the excellence of their qualities, and the actions they have perform'd, they are jealous of preserving their rank, and of shewing that they are not sway'd by their passions like the generality of men. This is the reason that they suffer people to offend and contradict them, and even to speak disrespectfully to them, pride making them fear the shame of rage, more than the injuries they have received. This sentiment will soon be conceiv'd if people will reflect that heroes are not insensible but to the injuries of those which are inferior to them ; and that when those demigods are offended by

demigods, they rage, or abandon themselves to anger, like men. 'Tis then certain that heroes, and all those in general who behave with moderation on occasions which disconcert us, feel the emotions of the passions; but they make secret efforts to suppress them and to prevent their appearance, that they may be thought exempt from them; and that it should not be imagin'd that they, who have power to conquer others, should be unable to conquer themselves; so that great men who answer coolly those who speak to them inconsiderately and audaciously, who avoid detraction, and are not offended when thwarted by any one, are people much more haughty and proud than the rest of mankind. They are even much more haughty than their appearance of insensibility is false: for as they are judicious and ingenious, they see every thing offensive in injurious proceedings, and penetrate into the intention of the author so deeply, that they feel in a lively manner the offence offered, and are vastly uneasy, tho' they would willingly persuade the world that they are piqued

KNOWING MANKIND. 107

piqued at nothing, and are above all injury and contempt. It is so true that they overcome anger by pride, that tho' God recommends nothing to man so highly as to keep his passions in subjection, he at the same time declares, that he will reprove the wisdom of the sages of the world ; and that this wisdom is a crime in his eyes, because it is vicious ; and that it is by virtue, and not by a sin so heinous as pride, that he will have us subdue the passions.

OF MODERATION.

IF the moderation of those whom prosperity does not render over bearing, nor whose proceedings, air, or manners, are in no respect affected by a turn of good fortune, was in reality what it appears to be, 'tis certain that it would be an admirable virtue. But our joy being always proportioned to our desires, it is very difficult

for those who see themselves sole possessors of the favour of kings, to feel with indifference an happiness, which is thought so rare and so estimable, as to be sought after with all the industry and eagerness imaginable. 'Tis then more reasonable to think that their moderation is only political; that it is an habitual craft, and an artifice to conceal their joy and keep it entirely to themselves. But why do they give themselves this pain? 'tis because the joy which arises from the possession of the good graces and confidence of a king is attended with insolence, and prevents a favourite from having the regard he should always have; and that he thinks he may dispense with the laws of civility and of custom; and that he has an assurance of affronting and offending, which is very extraordinary. But the worst effect of this sort of joy is, that it makes a man carry a high head, and blinds him in such a manner, that at last he abuses the king's favour, nor longer de-
means.

KNOWING MANKIND. 109

means himself properly, but entirely forgets his first station.

THEY are moderate in the second place, that they may less excite the envy which is attached to all those who are in favour, and which creates the utmost hatred. What happens on this occasion is, that the envious, willing to have all the advantages, all the places, all the happiness, that others enjoy, cannot bear them, and look on them as possessing what with more propriety belongs to themselves.

THEY are moderate in the third place, thro' fear, lest the emotions of their joy should appear in their countenance; and lest they should be urg'd, by the violence of this turbulent passion, to say or do any thing which might lessen them or make them disesteem'd.

THEY are moderate in the fourth place, that the world may think that, be their stations ever so high, their soul is still greater

greater than their fortune ; for whilst the man who sees his own meanness does all he can to raise himself to posts and dignities, his pride persuades him, and makes him endeavour to persuade others, that it is from his excellent qualities he draws his elevation of spirit, not from any grandeur conferred on him.

IN short, a man is moderate and restrains himself from being transported with joy, that he may taste the mildness of it ; which those who abandon themselves to transports never can, because their soul is, as it were, gone from itself. This sort of moderation is generally met with in ministers, who appear not to be moved with the happy success of things they have most ardently wish'd, whilst they feel a secret transport in their soul : this is discover'd by the favourable disposition they are found in at that time by those who recommend their interests to them : for we then experience that all our requests appear reasonable to them, all our affairs easy, and that
melancholy

KNOWING MANKIND. 111

melancholy and unprovided-for gentry are not disagreeable to them.

THESE are the secret satisfactions of ministers, who manage affairs at court, whilst the courtiers know that their good will has made them succeed, and look on the favours they receive as justice done them, and as the effect of their address and their skill.

THE moderation of conquerors is a desire of augmenting the glory they have acquir'd by the victory, and to make known that in them the man of honour is join'd to the great general. This is the moderation of the sages of the world.

OF MODESTY IN MEN.

MODESTY, far from being the effect of an humble disposition in those persons who affect it, as it should be if it was
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a true virtue, derives its birth from ambition and pride. What indubitably proves this is, that it is evident that boasting is a plain and visible vanity, which renders men contemptible and ridiculous; and that contempt is so opposite to the nature of man, that there is nothing he would omit to avoid it. From thence it comes to pass that proud men, who have sense and understanding, stifle incessantly the desire they have of publishing their great actions, their wit, their knowledge, and their worth; and that, far from applauding themselves, and blabbing out the praises they receive, they seem with uneasiness to hearken to them. They see likewise that a man who boasts is unpolished and little acquainted with the world; the proper effect of politeness being to form a man upon the model of honour; and its first care to make him shun the faults which are most disapprov'd: beside, a proud man is desirous of having it imagin'd that he is polite, and that he does not want any of the qualities which may make him merit the approbation of persons the most

most universally esteem'd; 'tis on this account he gives himself a great deal of pains to avoid speaking to his own advantage, or shewing by that means that he is subject to the common vices of those who have not been brought up at court, and who have receiv'd a mean education. In short, honourable and intelligent men see that the man who praises himself makes himself his own judge; which is a sort of injustice and blindness which does not favour of pride: for pride, as blind and unjust as it is, would be thought clear and just. 'Tis pride, therefore, which makes them fear to pass for people full of themselves to such a degree as to imagine that they could be equitable judges of their own merit. 'Tis pride that excites them to study and imitate the manners and method of acting, adopted by the modestest people, and which is the secret motive of their modesty.

In persons extraordinarily ingenuous, modesty is a delicate boast, and a sort of praise one gives himself, and which is express'd
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by silence ; which will not appear strange if we observe that silence oftentimes supplies the office of words, and has sometimes a greater effect ; this is met with in musick, where the long pauses and cessations known by the name of rests, if properly plac'd, have a wonderful effect, and contribute much to the harmony of the most agreeable airs. There are therefore people, who by silence explain their thoughts, and who understand the art of praising themselves without speaking a word : and those are they, who, having done any great action, say no more of it in company than if they had forgot it. They even put off all the discourse which might bring it into their thoughts ; and as soon as any one opens his mouth to speak of it, they retire, or make pretence they did not hear it, and return no answer to what was said : for their silence with respect to the great actions they have perform'd, whilst they make so much noise in the world, is a mute language, by which they praise themselves a thousand times more than vain men do by words : It is a concerted

KNOWING MANKIND. 115

certed silence, and equal to that of which masters of music make such an excellent use, that it serves at the same time to mark the beauty of the air, and to increase it. I must observe especially, as a thing which renders these false modests cognizable, that they are silent when every one is speaking of them, and they judge it to be of no use, or rather of detriment, to sound their own praises; but break silence, and do not fail to bring their great actions to light, and to make known their good qualities, when people are ignorant of them, and no one publishes them.

OF THE MODESTY OF WOMEN.

COLDNESS of constitution is the principal cause of the restraint and modesty of women. Besides, there is no force equal to that of the natural inclination; we cannot

not resist it without using a great violence to ourselves; and we cannot continue long in a violent situation: besides, there is no manner of acting more mild and more agreeable than to follow, in our actions, the inclinations nature has implanted; and, in short, there is nothing more convenient.

A good education is the second cause of the modesty of women: for girls have scarce got the use of reason, before a true horror for dishonourable words and actions is inculcated in them; and they are made to observe that all those who discourse or act immodestly, and with an air of libertinism, are despised by the world, and looked on as girls who have forfeited the characteristick of their sex. These impressions, which they receive in their early and tender years, far from being defaced by time, are like the letters which one cuts on the bark of a young tree, which increase in size and strength with the tree.

THE fear of being tarnished and of having a bad character is the third cause of the

KNOWING MANKIND. 117

the modesty of women; which we shall have no difficulty in believing, if we reflect that reputation is a bridle so strong, and so capable of restraining women, that those who carry on intrigues use all sorts of stratagems to keep them concealed from the knowledge of the world, that their character may agree with the pleasure they find in this commerce. Besides, there is nothing which disgraces so much, or so much destroys the reputation, as dissolute manners; or speaking openly words which publicly offend their modesty: 'tis on this account one should not be surprized at seeing a vast number of women, who appear to be infinitely removed from this depravation, for fear of being placed in the rank of women ruined and undone. There are even some, who, to put themselves on the footing of valuable women, affect so great a degree of modesty, that they cannot suffer immodest words, nor those which convey in a delicate manner things ever so little contrary to decency; this sort of modesty is found most commonly in persons of quality, and is a desire
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of shewing that they have not less advantage over women of mean extraction, by the politeness and decency of their manners, than by their birth.

AMONGST those who are coquettish, 'tis a desire of engaging the people, who, by the eclat of their merit or fortune, are fit to satisfy their vanity: but this is a subject on which we must not venture to enlarge.

THE passion of girls for matrimony contributes a great deal to their modesty; this passion is so strong that it makes them watch continually over themselves, to render all their actions conformable to the strictest rules of modesty, for as the condition of girls is a condition of subjection, as it is an insupportable situation not to be mistresses of their own conduct, and they hope to find in marriage the pleasure of independance; they long to be married with an inconceivable ardour: so that their modesty is a means, by which they insinuate to the men that they hazard nothing

thing in marrying them, and a sort of proclamation they make of their signal virtue.

OF PATIENCE IN SICKNESS.

IT is certain that patience prevents a man from falling into a languor, from being discouraged and uneasy, when attacked with any tedious and painful disorder, and that its proper office is to overcome the extreme aversion he has for sickness, which makes him incompatible with the smallest and least inconvenient ones.

Thus this is the demonstrative proof one takes to shew that the patience of the Stoicks was but an apparent virtue: for it is so certain a truth, that pain is so much the aversion of the will, that man would always fly it, if, in the hardships he undergoes, he did not look for something agreeable,

ble, which he wishes for. "Nobody," says St. AUGUSTINE, "willingly endures the evil which torments him, but to obtain the good which pleases him." Thus merchants undertake long and dangerous navigations, through hopes of growing rich; thus one undergoes the fatigue of a chase for the pleasure of it; and braves the hardships and dangers of war to gain reputation.

It is also plain that man suffers evil longer or shorter, and with more or less ease, in proportion to his earnestness in seeking the good he wishes; so that 'tis the force of his desire, which prevents his relenting, and causes all his patience. What conclusion should one draw from that? What St. THOMAS concludes from it is, that patience is a true virtue only in christians, because they bear with joy all the miseries of this life, for the love of God, and through the hopes of eternal life. On the other hand, the patience of the Pagans was but a false virtue; because, not believing there was another life, it was not to be happy after

after death they endured all the pains of this world; but through the desire they had, some of amassing treasure, others to gain places, and the rest to gain the esteem of mankind. Thus patience, far from being a virtuous and praise-worthy disposition, was nothing more than the heat and obstinacy of their passions. This allowed, one may justly draw this consequence: that the patience of Stoicks, whose hearts burned with ambition, was the result of vanity.

THE opinion they entertained that it is allowable for a wise man to put an end to his life, in order to end the pains which render it insupportable to him, is the second proof of the falsity of their patience: for how do these two maxims agree, which are so opposite to each other, that there is no pain, be it ever so violent, which can deject a wise man; and that there are pains insupportable to the wise, so insupportable, that, to deliver themselves from it, they may innocently make an attempt on their own lives? A strong desire to live is the

secret motive of the patience, with which the sages of the world support sickness: for as life is the greatest of man's temporal blessings; and riches, honour and glory are but extra-existent things, which make only a transitory impression on him, and that life is the only good which exists in him, and by which he subsists and continues himself, love of life is of consequence the first of all passions. 'Tis a passion which reigns in all ages, all sexes, all situations, and all conditions; and although there are many people, who are neither ambitious nor avaritious, yet there is no one who does not wish to live.

'Tis this passion of preserving life, and recovering speedily, which makes sick people who are in their senses think, that uneasinesses and disquietudes irritate the disorder, and that nature requires repose to restore her to herself: This is the reason they reject all thoughts, and suppress all the emotions which tend to impatience.

A strong desire to live is the

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KNOWING MANKIND. 123

THE patience of sick people is sometimes an artifice of self-love, which serves to draw the compassion of their relations and friends, and redouble the affection of those who attend them.

OF CONTEMPT FOR DEATH.

HEROES do not shrink at dangers which make the most confident tremble, because, at the time they hazard their lives, they have no regard for any thing but their promotion; the glory they have before their eyes prevents them from seeing death, although it offers itself to them continually throughout the engagement. From thence it comes to pass that, being without fear in battles, where they are liable to so many fatal blows, and where death is almost certain, they are nevertheless afraid of the prick of a lancet; and when attacked with a distemper ever so little dangerous, they are immediately seized with the

terrors of death, and uneasiness and apprehensions get the better of their intrepidity. So that, with all the vanity which puffs them up, they are no more than other men.

'Tis likewise a certain truth that death, which makes nature quake, and which is the horror and aversion of the will, can never be despised. Death makes nature quake, because our fears are always proportioned to our desires; and as we have none greater than those of self-preservation, our greatest fear is the end of our life. We see likewise that it is the dread and aversion of the will in this, that the most miserable man in the world has less difficulty in submitting to his misery, than consenting to his destruction: 'tis for this reason that, without complying with the opinions of philosophers, contrary to the sentiments and experience of all mankind, I must delineate the career of the resolution with which great men meet death, the tranquillity with which some await it, the patience

of

of many at the point of death, and of that with which many resign themselves.

THOSE who are convinced that their malady will carry them off, take patience, because the law of death is too universal for any individual to expect escaping it; and therefore they cannot think it just to bewail in particular a rigour from which no one is exempt.

IN the second place, because man, thro' the ordinary regard of self-love, seeing that he cannot preserve his life, thinks at least of saving his reputation, and will not do any thing unworthy a reasonable man and a man of honour.

IN the third place, because he is governed by custom; and suffers himself to be led by that notion, which persuades him that every time he receives the slightest wound in his honour, he at the same time exposes his life; and 'tis on this account he applies to this imaginary mischief so strange a remedy. He even follows it till he suf-

fers death without uneasiness or murmuring; and besides, he sees that amidst those who are in danger of dying, there are none who either cry, lament, or are in despair.

THE last reason is, that, finding it useless to be impatient, uneasy or discontented, one makes a virtue of necessity. The patience with which the greatest number dies, comes from the belief that whatever disorder they have will be conquered; for the love of life, which is incomparably more ardent in us when in danger of losing it, than we are in the enjoyment of perfect health, removes from our mind all apprehensions of death, and fills us with all those flattering thoughts which give any hopes of life; which is the reason that, however bad the physician's opinion is of the disorder of those who are thus prepossessed, and notwithstanding all their friends can say, they are inwardly persuaded they shall not die; so that death, coming on by surprize, causes no sort of uneasiness, nor in the least affects them.

KNOWING MANKIND. 127

Common people do not fear death, because their light of reason is so dull that it cannot penetrate into the nature of the disease, nor understand it till they feel its effects; and even in general they have no conception of things, but by what they see or feel; and are oftentimes more afraid of the solemn apparatus of death, than they are of death itself; as is apparent in those who are led to punishment, who are more terrified at the sight of the gallows, at the executioner and the spectators, than at the thoughts of losing their life, which is the greatest and most valuable treasure man is possessed of, and the choicest of human blessings.

THE tranquillity with which one dies, does not proceed from the constitution, which can be no more than a distant cause of it, but from the quality of the distemper: for, as the disorders which affect the head with malignant vapours, inflame the mind and cause emotions in the brain, and by that means torment the patient, those which take a different course, leave the

head quite at ease, and the spirits calm, so that the sick person enjoys a profound peace. 'Tis from this cause it so often happens that the most timorous die quietly, and that the most resolute die with much more remorse and inquietude.

THE resolution with which great men encounter death, is a vain affectation, and a desire that they should be thought to have greater and more spirited souls than other people: 'tis their last part, which they play so much the better that they may send away the spectators fully satisfied, and leave a great idea of themselves. 'Tis in some the effect of the diversion of the soul, which turns itself from the sight of so frightful an object as death, to apply itself to a more agreeable one.

THE different sentiments of those who will not hearken to any thing concerning death, and those who chuse to be entertained with such discourse, should be attributed to the same cause; and the fear they have of death, is the occasion that some

KNOWING MANKIND. 129

some cannot bear it, whilst others wish to be left to the thoughts of it; the first because it appears dreadful to them, the latter because they expect to find, by a frequent meditation on it, a less terrible shock at its approach. But if it is as impossible for a man not to dread death, as it is to hate life, and if he cannot divest himself of the sentiments nature has implanted in him, it is plain that the contempt of death is false in men, and that all those who seem to despise it either don't know it, don't see it, or else are vain persons, who dissemble the agitations it causes, and who tremble in their hearts, whilst they appear serene and unruffled.

OF CONSTANCY.

WE should not be sorry that the philosophers were carried to so great an excess as to advance, that the wise find it agreeable to be burned alive; but, on the con-

contrary, we should rejoice at it; for philosophy has betray'd itself by these boastings and this excess. She has shewn that all her force consists only in words; and that Zeno, CHRYSIPPUS, and EPICURUS, who have passed for extraordinary solid and sensible men, were vain and chimerical ones, who rack'd their fancy to form the highest and purest idea of virtue possible, without taking any pains that this idea should contribute to human virtue.

COMMON sense informs us that constancy acts on the soul, and not on exterior objects; that her whole duty consists in fortifying it, and putting it in a condition of bearing the greatest torments; and that she has no power to suspend the action of the fire, much less to change its nature, or to render it pleasant.

NOTHING but God can produce this wonderful effect; and he has sometimes done it in favour of the holy martyrs, to whom he gave a heavenly power capable of overcoming sensibility and all the reluctance

KNOWING MANKIND. 131

lucency of nature ; or indeed they had rather a foretaste of the felicity of heaven, which made them feel an ineffable joy, in which their soul was absorbed.

It is not that any thing of the same kind happened with respect to the pagans, who suffered the heat of the fire with the greatest tranquillity and constancy ; and that, as the love of God which the christians embraced, and the reward which accompanies it, lessened their sensation that they might endure it, so the vehement passions, which set the pagans beside themselves, hurried them so in pursuit of the objects, to which their soul was so strongly attached, that, during the time of this alienation, they were not so sensible as one generally is of what incommodates the body : but as this sort of extasy, which is caused by the vehemence of the passions, only distracts the soul ; and that in the other case God, by a preternatural and miraculous operation, did not render the sages of the pagans insensible, it was a ridiculous thing in them to ad-

vance that they were happy in the midst of the flames.

It is then a foolish imagination to think that virtue has the power of mitigating the rigour of punishments ; what is precisely true is, that the pleasure a man feels in following his passions gives him strength to support the pains ; and that a man is able to bear them better or worse in proportion to the pleasure he receives. This is the reason that the Romans, who were possessed with a love of glory, had courage enough to endure the greatest hardships.

THE constancy of those who seem to despise death, does not proceed from the force of virtue ; but, as we have already said, from a stratagem of self-love, which fills the mind with every other thing to deprive it of the sight of that terrible object. A man, in that condition, chooses generally an occupation which has afforded him pleasure, that he may remove a thought so
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melancholy, and so capable of giving him uneasiness.

PRIDE and faint-heartedness is generally the source of the constancy of those who look for death : such was that of the philosopher CALONUS, for whom ALEXANDER had such esteem and veneration ; for being tormented with the colic, and no longer able to bear it, he caused a pile of wood to be erected in sight of ALEXANDER'S whole army, and walking up to it cloathed in a purple robe, covered with precious stones, and crowned with a chaplet of flowers, as soon as it was lighted, he threw himself into the midst of the flames.

THE constancy with which great men receive and support unexpected accidents, great misfortunes and afflictions, is but an appearance of resolution they assume to deceive others, and which often deceives themselves : 'tis an art, by which they conceal their displeasure in their soul, in order to preserve a serene countenance : 'tis a violent effort they make, to keep to themselves

selves their emotions, which become the the, greater by their fruitless endeavours to disguise them.

“CONSTANT men,” says EPICURUS, “move themselves strangely, that they should not have any emotions: they exercise real inhumanities against their own hearts; and one may say, there is a sort of wise men who are enraged at themselves.”

“THE wise man,” says ZENO, “ought to be sincere, and not to testify, by any of his actions, that he would have people think him better than he is.”

ONE discovers the falsity of the constancy of those who are removed from court, after having been in favour, or having had a share in the administration of affairs, by the correspondence they keep with their friends, the attention they pay to all the changes which happen at court, the continual interest they are making to be recalled; but especially by the joy they testify when the

KNOWING MANKIND. 135

the news of their re-establishment surprises them, and does not give them time to study their countenance. 'Tis by these marks that one knows, how insincere the discourses of ministers and favourites removed from court generally prove, who, being retired to their houses, pretend "they are content, and that they are entirely taken up with the thoughts of the amusement they find in viewing the pleasing meanders of a river which glides by the end of their garden." In truth, those whom the course of a river can divert, must not be easily tired.

—THE constancy of those who pique themselves on bearing the wretchedness of a prison without uneasiness is not less false, nor less vain, than that of which I have been just speaking: for as liberty respirates the soul in the same manner, as air does the body; as it is the appendix of man's nature; the power of going whither he will, and of doing what he pleases, is so dear to him, that he cannot be deprived of

it without undergoing insupportable uneasiness; this single reason suffices to convince us of the falsity of those who boast of not finding a prison disagreeable and loathsome to them.

THERE are other kinds of constancy: one man is constant to diminish the joy and triumph of an enemy; another is constant from the weariness of inquietude and chagrin; in short, many are constant only that they may make a virtue of necessity.

OF GENEROSITY.

WHAT dignifies the power of generosity is, that, besides the pleasure of revenge being so great and so agreeable that it is a difficult matter for a man to refrain from it, victory and all the advantages that obtain against those which forbid him to take
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it, so puff up his heart, that he has a great difficulty to govern himself.

It cannot then be denied that the force of generosity is an extraordinary one; but it does not follow from thence, that it is a virtuous force. "For there are," says Saint AUGUSTINE, "two sorts of men of fortitude, which include all the race of mankind." Some are strong from the vehemence of their desires; and others, that is to say christians, from the greatness of their charity: There is nothing which the latter would not enterprise and attempt, thro' love of God; there is nothing which the former would not essay, or are not capable of executing, thro' self-love, and to satisfy their passions. 'Tis from thence they derive all their power, and 'tis ambition that gives them enough of it to surmount revenge: for, however agreeable the pleasure of vengeance may be, an ambitious man, who loves eclat, perceives the glory he acquires by a generous proceeding is much more agreeable than revenge: even

even reason itself is joined to ambition, and makes him see that vengeance, however agreeable it may be, is but a transitory sentiment; whereas the reputation he acquires by a single act of generosity is durable and of long continuance.

THE generosity of ministers, and all those who are in authority, proceeds from their interest; 'tis for this reason that, when they learn that a man of merit or of quality, who is not amongst their friends, is in any difficulties, they endeavour to draw him out of them, to gain him over and attach him to themselves. 'Tis from the same motive of policy that they sometimes procure for those who have been their greatest enemies greater favours than for their most zealous and faithful friends.

OUR natural malignity of temper is the most common cause of our generosity; for the services we render those, who have opposed our designs, are, as it were, so many burning coals heaped on their heads; that

that is to say, we do not any good office for them, but that they may be confounded at the ill ones they have done us, and to render them more culpable if they continue to offend us. The spirit of revenge always enters into this malignity: we think, that if a man, of whom we are not revenged but by good offices, fails in the obligations he owes us, he will dishonour himself, and will revenge us much more than we ourselves could have done.

THE generosity which conquerors use towards the vanquished, is either vain or politic; and one has reason to be astonished that the historians should rank the favourable behaviour of ALEXANDER to the mother, wife, and daughters of DARIUS, amongst the number of truly generous actions; for, besides that their sex and quality laid him under a sort of necessity to treat them well, and that he could not without a blemish on his reputation have behaved otherwise, he loved glory to such distraction, that, not contented with the honour

nour he had acquired by his victories, he thought incessantly of adding to it by his honourable proceedings. Thus he assuaged as much as he could the misfortunes of the captive princesses, that they should not continue an hatred against him, who had been the occasion of them. He aimed also at making the sentiments of DARIUS and all the royal family favourable, and to dispose them to think, that, as their bad luck had robbed them of the eclat of their former fortune, and had subjected them to his authority, they could not fall into better hands. It was not either to revenge the death of DARIUS, or through hatred of the treason, that he punished so severely the horrid attempt of the traitor BESSUS; since that perfidy, cursed as it was, had put ALEXANDER in possession of the greatest empire in the world. It was then thro' honour, and thro' interest, that he revenged the death

KNOWING MANKIND. 141

death of DARIUS, but chiefly thro' interest; for he sentenced BESSUS to a cruel death, to remedy the frequent conspiracies the grandees of his court formed against him. We can much less give the name of generosity to what he did, when, pushing his victory, and making a diligent search to find DARIUS alive, he found him stretched in his chariot; for when he saw that he was dead, he covered his body with his cloak, and wept bitterly at the misfortune of this great king, who had met with an end so unsuitable to his glory. It was not any sentiment of generosity, which made him shed tears and lament the misfortune of his enemy; because DARIUS was not his enemy; it was ALEXANDER who was DARIUS's enemy, and who had invaded his kingdom. It was ALEXANDER then that was the true subject of his tears; and who, considering himself in the person of DARIUS, saw himself abandoned in him, assassinated by his best friends, and loaded with all the misfortunes

fortunes which usually follow great success.

OF THE MAGNANIMITY OF PHILOSOPHERS.

CICERO says, that magnanimity is nothing but the liberty of the soul: from whence he concludes, that, as the philosophers have delivered themselves by their efforts from the servitude of the passions, and have procured this liberty, they should be inserted in the number of magnanimous with so much the more justice as they have done it so effectually; whereas heroes and conquerors are in general only so in the eyes of the people.

THE justness of the reasoning of CICERO depends on the truth of the supposition that philosophers were free from all the passions. But this supposition is very false;

false; for they were slaves; who, having broke some of their chains, thought they had broken all, and people possessed with an ambition to appear severe in their manners, that they might excite the admiration of men. It was that ambition which they saw in each other, though they would not see it in themselves. As the pride of these Pagan philosophers is remarked and blamed by the historians who have described their lives, who were not at all suspected of injustice towards them, there is no necessity of bringing other proofs to shew that ambition was their ruling passion; and that, being under the yoke of the most violent of all passions, they were neither free nor magnanimous.

As to those philosophers who would not accept the government of republicks, as EPICURUS; and who slipped the opportunity of making themselves kings, as LYCURGUS and SOLON; we cannot regulate our opinion better than by those of the same

same authors. They testify that LYCURGUS would not accept the kingdom of Sparta, because he could not without killing his nephew, to whom the kingdom belonged; that is to say, without polluting himself by an horrible crime, and without losing the grand character of a man of probity and integrity, which he had acquired: that SOLON made no use of the opportunity he had of becoming king of the Athenians, because it happened that, a quarrel between the poor and the great becoming a civil war, the two parties who disputed the authority agreed to put it in his hands, and he chose rather to be trustee by their consent, than to appropriate it to himself by force and violence; and what obliged EPICURUS to refuse the government of the republick of Athens was, that he saw an opportunity of making himself head of a great sect, which appeared to him more honourable and more proper to satisfy his sort of ambition, than to be the minister of a powerful state.

THERE

THERE are likewise the most faithful and excellent historians, who inform us, that those who, after the example of philosophers, have refused or quitted the highest public posts, had no better motives than they: that LUCULLUS would not accept the full authority, which the senate and people would have given him at Rome, through the fear he had of trusting himself with POMPEY: that SCIPIO the Great refused the dignity of chief of the senate, and went to end his days out of Rome, thro' the rage he conceived at seeing himself treated with such ingratitude by the Romans, whom he had raised to the highest glory, and whose empire he had so greatly extended: that SYLLA gave up the dictatorship, that, the latter part of his life being free from cruelties and barbarities, he might forget those he had committed, and that his name should not be transmitted to posterity, charged with public hatred; as also to shun the violent death his dreadful behaviour gave him reason to dread.

ONE may reasonably think that the resolution which CHARLES the Fifth of France took to divest himself of all his estates, kingdoms, and empires, was inspired by his piety and a desire of benefiting his health; but they were seconded by many human considerations: the strongest were, the continual gout with which he was tormented, which put it out of his power to sustain the great number of enemies which he had; the two unfortunate affairs he met with, almost at the same time, in France and Germany, after being used to have glorious success; and, above all, the opinion he had, that fortune had abandoned him, and had declared in favour of HENRY the Second.

THESE are the particular motives which induce men to refuse and to quit the administration of affairs, and sovereign authority: let us see what are those which generally offer themselves.

INDOLENCE, whose real strength is little known, has sufficient to make a man con-

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temn scepters and crowns; for it makes them consider the cares, inquietudes, and anxieties, of all those who hold the reins of government; what circumspection, what vigilance, they must have; with what diligence they are often forced to fly to the frontiers of their kingdoms; the necessity they are under of dissembling, of restraining themselves, and even of suffering many disagreeable things; and all these appearances surprize and affect them so strongly, that a crown, which is so desirable in the eyes of other men, seems to them a load which must greatly oppress them.

INCAPACITY is another cause of the refusal and desertion of kingdoms and empires; for those who perceive themselves devoid of the qualifications necessary for the government of a state, either have not the assurance to take it, or, if they do accept it, seeing that they totter under the weight of so great a charge, are impatient to surrender it.

A THIRD cause is a baseness of heart, or, if one must give it another name, a natural abjectness, which some people are possessed of, who seem to be born to obey, as there are others who have a greatness of soul suitable to the dignity of scepters and crowns, who are worthy to bear them, and seem to have been born to rule.

IN fact, if we consider with attention the different tempers and talents of men, we shall not doubt that there are divers orders of men, as there are divers orders of angels; and that those who are of an inferior order are in continual want of being informed, and conducted, by those of a superior one.

A GRAND and delicate sort of ambition is the last cause of the refusal and desertion of crowns and kingdoms; for it makes those who possess it perceive, that the magnanimous actions one does very often, and which many people have in their power to do, do not merit sovereign esteem; that it is only those which are very rarely

rarely done, and which require an extraordinary power of soul, which, by their scarceness and singularity, distinguish one man from all other men, and elevate him above them: 'Tis that ambition, which makes them see that there is no crown which one should so highly value as the contempt set on it; and that, however great the pomp and solemnity of taking possession of a kingdom may be, there is no less in resigning it.

BUT, if the contempt of sovereign power and ministerial authority is not sincere and virtuous in those who quit them, how can it be so in those who do not quit them, yet boast of despising them? But what opinion must we conceive of those grandees, who, retiring from court, go to pass their lives at their country-houses? I answer, that it is not through wisdom they take this step; but, in general, those are people who want money, or spirit, or a heart, or who have not an agreeable temper, or have some considerable defect in their person.

“ It is for this reason,” says SENECA, “ a man jests, if he says that they know how to live; for all that can be said of them is, that they know how to hide themselves;” and, to say the truth, those who can stay at court, who are able to defray the expence, and who have a certain sett of qualities which one must have to appear agreeable there, do not quit it because they discover the vanity of their pursuits; but, on the contrary, they quit it because they have not obtained what they looked for, and through spite; one man, because the command of the army has been given to a man of less experience and service than himself; another, because he has been refused what he had a promise of, and long expected; a third, because of the uneasiness he feels at the sudden promotion of a favourite, of nothing more than common qualities, and whom his fortune alone sets a value on.

’Tis then through spite for not having satisfied their ambition, and in order to content it in the best manner they can, that the

the greatest part of people of quality form the resolution of retiring from court; for the nature of man is so vain-glorious, that he is always fond of being highly considered; so that when he cannot make a great figure at court, he goes to make it in the country, where he is visited and honoured by a great number of gentlemen, who rise by his patronage; or he makes himself remarkable by his table, his attendants, and his equipage. 'Tis not however unsatisfied ambition, which makes them all retire from court: "There are some among them, in the number of which was
 " VATIA, says SENECA, who love so passionately their ease and indolence, that
 " they readily renounce the world, its
 " pomp, and its grandeurs; and shut them-
 " selves up in their country-houses, that
 " their time should not be taken up with
 " any business, nor their repose disturbed by
 " any emotion; and that they may taste plea-
 " sure there without any mixture of pain."

THE motives even of the philosophers, which appeared more honest, were not so

in fact, nor consisted of any thing virtuous; for some, like HERACLITUS, removed themselves from the society of men, because they could not bear their manners: others, like DEMOCRITUS, could not prevail on themselves to live in towns, but loved to spend their days in lonely and solitary places, that, having all their time to themselves, they might contemplate nature, discover what it conceals from us; and satisfy an insatiable desire of knowledge, which one makes no account of, though it should be reckoned amongst the passions which are most prejudicial to man, and most contrary to his repose.

OF VALOUR.

THERE are two passions, with which almost all the brave are animated: one appears plainly, and the other lies concealed within the heart. Ambition is that which appears, and which they follow more willingly,

lingly, because it is a passion of the mind, whose corruption does not strike the eye, and because (concupiscence having depraved the taste of man) there is nothing which is more pleasing to him than glory: he is even so dazzled with that which he acquires by exploits of war, that the greatest part of the time he does not see the danger; and one may say that the greatest dangers appear to him either great or small, as he is more or less smitten with the love of glory.

THE passion which is concealed in the heart of the brave, is a desire to establish their reputation, that they may be sometimes able to sit down with honour and lead a calm undisturbed life. This desire of enjoying a tranquil life is cherished in the soul of all those, who seem the most attached to war; but if one finds some of them who carry it on all their lives, and even seek it in a strange country, this is owing to their natural ferocity; or because, having learned the trade of war from their earliest years, they are accustomed.

customed to it, and know no other; or because war furnishes them with their expences, and also the means of making some noise in the world.

THESE two passions have so much the greater share in the valour of kings, because the eminence of their rank, which sets them above the rest of men, obliges them to shew, by their military atchievements, that they are no less elevated above them by the greatness of their souls, and by their valour. This is the reason, that ambitious princes are never satisfied, whilst they are only esteemed and praised by their subjects; but desire, with the greatest ardour and impatience, to extend their renown beyond the limits of their kingdom. But whilst they cover the field with their armies, whilst they lay sieges, and give battle, they incessantly think of the means whereby to make themselves happy, and sigh for the time when they shall taste those exquisite and delicious pleasures, which their situation in life promises them, and

KNOWING MANKIND. 155

and furnishes them with in abundance. "I
" will subdue the Romans," said PYR-
RHUS; " then I shall make a conquest of
" Lybia and Macedonia; and, after that,
" I will rest and enjoy myself."

THE desire of making their name
known thro' the whole country, and of
rendering it for ever famous, kindles in
the generals of armies that warlike ardour,
which forms all their grand designs, and
makes them effect so many heroic exploits;
what augments and redoubles it, is, the
ambition of recommending themselves at
court, and of being looked on as the sup-
port of the state, by all those who inte-
rest themselves therein, and especially by
the king himself.

THE ambition of being honoured with
the highest posts to which one arrives by
means of war, to be distinguished, and
to dignify their offspring, causes the bra-
very of commanders of less distinction.
'Tis not that the desire of making a noise
in the world, has not a great share in it;

but what principally instigates them to signalize themselves on great occasions, is a desire of setting themselves above the rest of their countrymen, and of making their families illustrious.

THE courage of subaltern officers is excited by an ambition of aspiring to the rank of generals, or thro' hopes that their services will be rewarded by some considerable government, or thro' a desire of making a great figure in life, or the necessity they are under of depending on war for subsistence.

HERE we must observe, as we proceed, that, tho' the motives which actuate the brave are not favourable to their minds, when they do these brave and courageous actions, they still have an effect on their hearts, where they are as so many hidden springs, which have a share in their resolutions and enterprises.

PEOPLE of quality are engaged in war lest they should gain discredit by leading a
tran-

KNOWING MANKIND. 157

tranquil life, so little consistent with their condition, and which might give just suspicions of the baseness of their courage : gentlemen, to draw themselves out of obscurity, and to avoid the pain of an idle life : and citizens, to gain higher rank than that of a citizen, which is the next to that of gentleman.

IN short, soldiers go to war thro' necessity, and they exhibit their courage on all occasions, however dangerous, because they are unacquainted with the danger : they enter into it thro' necessity ; for, as necessity makes them take the most fatiguing, most disagreeable, most shameful, and most whimsical professions, it also makes them take the most hazardous, so that one may say, that soldiers sell their lives for a livelihood, as domestics sell their labour and their liberty.

As to the little knowledge they have of danger, it proceeds from the grossness of their senses, which always causes that of the mind,

mind, so that ARISTOTLE said, "the idea
 " of lead, or iron, does not strike them as
 " it does other men." "The Gods,"
 says an antient poet, "have given but a
 " small degree of understanding or sensibi-
 " ty to those who are destined to servi-
 " tude."

THE boldness of soldiers, and sometimes
 even of the bravest officers, proceeds
 from a fear of death, and the greatness of
 the danger to which they see themselves
 exposed: for then, a desire to live, collect-
 ing and employing all the force of man,
 makes him enterprize and hazard every
 thing. This sort of courage is found in
 animals; who, seeing themselves attacked
 and close pressed, rush, without any sort
 of fear, on those who would deprive them
 of life.

WE must add to all sorts of courage
 which the violence of passion inspires, that
 which is purely natural: that sort of va-
 lour is very dangerous, because it is not
 guided

KNOWING MANKIND. 149

guided by reason; and it is generally a rashness, and sometimes a ferocity.

THESE are the general causes of valour; 'tis not possible to set down all the particular ones; I must content myself with giving a hint of some, and observing, that jealousy has very often a large share in the greatest exploits, as have also hatred and ill-will. Courage has also extraneous causes, for (when the charge is given) the air, agitated by the noise of trumpets, of fifes, and of drums, and kindled by the fire of ordnance, inflames the mind so much, that the warriors feel an ardour which cannot be restrained: this fire of the mind, is the courage of those who have naturally none, and is a powerful assistant to those who have it.

OF

OF THE VIRTUES WHICH
HAVE A RELATION TO
TEMPERANCE.

OF A CONTEMPT OF RICHES.

IT seems that pride raised up the Cynicks to shew that man might acquire the greatest virtues by his own industry, and to apprise us at the same time, that he always finds some invention or stratagem to procure glory even from disgrace. For these philosophers led a very austere life, were coarsely cloathed, and adhered to poverty with such strictness, that they lived on charity ; but, on the other hand, with so much
often-

ostentation, that they gave to understand, they prided themselves on the rigour of their practice. "I am as abstemious as the Gods," said **DIODENES**. Thus were they disapproved by all the philosophers, except the Stoicks; and **EPICURUS**, who was so severe in his life and opinions, made an express rule, by which he forbid his disciples to imitate them; "The wise," "says he, "will neither beg, nor live after the manner of the Cynicks." This I relate with the greatest pleasure, in order to shew, that the virtues which made the greatest eclat among the pagans are those, the falsity of which they have themselves recognized, and which they have most generally condemned. But it is by the testimony of those alone who lived in the time of the Cynicks, and knew them, it can be proved, that the love of poverty, of which they made profession, was but a virtue in appearance: one makes it apparent by these reasons; the first of which is, that the greatest part were either born poor, or became so, as **DIODENES**, who, being banished his country

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try for a dishonourable action; was constrained to beg alms.

WHAT makes it appear much more certain, that the philosophers, who had great fortunes, never vowed poverty is, that PLATO and ARISTOTLE were always, the one, well and richly cloathed, and the other, furnished elegantly; and that SENECA, who cried out so vehemently against luxury, had a grand palace in Rome, and a country-house, where the scarcest and most valuable curiosities were to be seen.

BESIDES, it is visible that pride, which continually prompts men to give the best appearance to every thing shameful about them, inticed the Cynicks to insinuate to those that saw them, that poverty had appeared worthy of their choice; that they had souls too great to dread want, and the sufferings of a condition, into which the world was afraid of falling, and, that they had overcome avarice, to which the greatest part of mankind are slaves. The victory

tory of avarice flatters human pride; for it is with that passion, as rivers into which a vast number of rivulets run, which enlarge them, and render their course violent and rapid.

THE desire of having all that is necessary for the preservation of life, the passion of acquiring fortune enough to live comfortably, and to be free from the anxiety a man is under when he has not wherewithal to live; that of having the means to enjoy the most exquisite pleasures of life; the inclination of raising one's-self by posts and dignities to a degree of honour, and of making a figure in the world; and many other passions, join themselves to avarice, and give it an extraordinary force and impetuosity; besides, avarice is not among the number of passions the heart of man is apprehensive of, because their yoke is inconvenient to him. He finds, for example, in hatred, a spleen which displeases him; he feels himself too much pressed by the impatient

ent desires of revenge, and too much agitated by the transports and violence of anger ; and, on that account, resists his passions ; but he has an extreme uneasiness in defending himself from avarice, which is among the number of useful and agreeable passions ; and besides, riches have some advantages, which put their condition on an equality with that of kings, and others, which seem to make it preferable. The condition of rich and opulent men appears not to be inferior to that of kings, in this ; that they are honoured and paid court to ; that they have every thing at wish, and the extent of their power is inconceivable : it is further advantageous, as their felicity is pure and lasting, whereas, that of sovereigns is blended with cares, and often interrupted by melancholy accidents ; and also, because a large fortune gives a man in some measure a greater independance than that of kings ; since, however absolute they are, they must necessarily have a thousand cares and circumspections, and are obliged to keep measures with

KNOWING MANKIND. 165

with other kings, and even sometimes with their own subjects ; so that one may say of opulence, what a philosopher said of beauty, “ that it is the royalty of private persons ;” and, what another said of virtue, “ that it is a royalty without subjection.”

I HAVE laid before my readers all the advantages of riches, and the greatness of people's attachment to them ; to the end that it may be understood, that the Cynicks embraced poverty, and some other virtues which were not in use among the pagans, to deface, by the rumour of their actions, those of other philosophers, and to have a degree of excellence above them, equal to that which the philosophers had with respect to other men, by the practice of ordinary virtues : their method of dressing, not only coarse, but singular, discovered sufficiently the intention they had, and that all they did, was only to make themselves regarded by men ; which verifies what Saint CYPRIAN says, “ that the
“ philo-

“ philosophers have not the truth of virtue,
“ but only the pride of it.”

THE contempt of riches, which made the Cynicks in such vogue, was, then, but hypocrisy and vanity in those who deserted their fortunes, as CRATES, who sold his patrimony, and distributed the money he got for it amongst the Thebans. In those that refused the presents they were offered, 'twas an ambition they entertained of appearing more reformed in their morals, and more perfect than the most celebrated philosophers of that age. In other Cynicks, the contempt of riches was an amends they made themselves for the wrong that they imagined fortune had done them; or it was a sort of address, by which a man always makes a virtue of a contempt for what he has not, nor can by any means obtain. 'Tis not even going far enough, to say, that the contempt of riches in them was neither virtuous nor sincere. I must even add, that it was not sensible: for it is.

not good sense, to deprive one's-self of the sweets and comforts of life, to acquire useless praises.

OF MODERATION IN EXPENCES.

ONE sees sometimes at court, men, who think that it will not be useless for them to keep a good table, and to have grand equipages ; that the delicacy and politeness of their entertainments may attract all the people of merit and quality ; that their extravagance will reflect honour on them at court, and will mildly induce the king to confer on them considerable gratuities, and to invest them with employments proportionable to the flight they have taken.

ONE meets with others, who take a quite different pursuit, and who are persuaded

suaded that they shall never keep the posts to which they are raised, more certainly or longer than by moderation in expences. Their reasons are, that expence stands the greatest part of the courtiers in no stead but to ruin them; that the court, jealous to hinder this expence from having any good effect, generally blames it or makes it a subject of raillery; and that those who live there elegantly are mistaken if they think to oblige the sovereigns by that means, to load them with lucrative honours and preferments, because sovereigns do not like to be engaged, by these artifices, to deal their favours, which they fear to distribute among those who require such great ones.

AMONGST these reasons, there is a very strong one, which induces ministers and favourites to be moderate in their expences; which is, that, having a thorough knowledge of the sentiments of men, they know that their promotion offends them; and that therefore they should not irritate them by the magnificence of their equipages; that

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this magnificence is a sort of insolence, which they use with regard to the rest of mankind ; that it seems, by the pompous rumour of their expences, they have a design to insult all those who are not in favour with them. They know likewise, that when the court is ill disposed in favour of any one, they lose no time to prejudice him ; that is the reason that all their care and their study is to avoid pomp and pride, for fear of exciting envy ; so that their moderation is a sort of sanctuary for their fortunes.

MODERATION, in some of them, is an avarice disguised and covered with the pretence of modesty : one might even say, that it is an avarice adorned with modesty : for the vanity of man is so great, that he is not content with concealing his vices ; he even labours to adorn them and make them pass for virtues.

In men delicately ambitious, moderation is a nice and affected pride, which makes I them

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them despise the pageantry of those who are curious in dress, and in furniture; and endeavour to make themselves remarkable for the elegance of their table.

OF GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF RELATIONS AND FRIENDS.

THERE is no necessity to use much argument to prove, it is not the dead that people lament, even when deeply concerned at their loss. I must only beg persons of understanding to consult themselves, to sound their inclinations, and to endeavour to discover the essential causes of their grief. They will soon observe, I am confident, that it is not the death of their friends, but what they lose by their death, that makes them lament; and that, the same interest which causes their affliction, when the hail has destroyed their corn and vineyards, or when a fire has burned their houses; the same interest, I say, is the occasion

KNOWING MANKIND. 171

casion that they are affected with the loss of a man, whose friendship was agreeable, honourable, or useful to them : A great lord supports us in the world ; a minister loads our family with favours ; a private person, by the agreeableness of his person, and by the fidelity of his friendship, was the sole happiness we had in life : we lose them, and we lament them, not through loss of them, but of our pleasures and profits : I think, this may be without difficulty discovered.

It is with much more difficulty we can conceive, that people acquire vanity from affliction : there are, however, persons who affect an excess of grief at the death of their friends, to make themselves remarkable, and more noted than the rest of mankind.

THERE is another sort of people, who make an appearance of being grieved and afflicted at the death of their friends, that

others may be compassionate to them, and sympathize in their troubles.

IN short, the tears which flow from the lowest source, are those, which weakness causes women to shed on all occasions : for, besides that tears are their eloquence in matters of business, and their strongest armour in those of necessity, it seems that they are hired to lament all the accidents of life, even of subjects to which they are indifferent, provided they are witnesses of them : It is true, their tears soon dry up, at least commonly. This I say, because there are some heroines in affliction, who, at the death of their husbands, form a design of rendering their grief endless, in order to signalize themselves : Besides, they take this resolution, to inform the world, that their husbands were uncommonly amiable, and that themselves only were beloved by them ; and to give a great idea of the happiness they have lost : But the most usual cause of the greatness and continuance of their grief, is, that they see themselves

selves fallen from the rank which they held, and the consequence they were used to assume.

IMITATION, ostentation, and interest, are the grand sources of tears. Imitation causes many people to cry on afflicting and grievous occasions, because men have a natural inclination to copy one after another, which leads them on to do perpetually what they see others do; and, as from infancy they have observed people affected at the death of relations and of friends, so as to occasion tears, they sigh and weep when they lose them, thro' the same desire of imitation that makes them sing or dance when their relations or children marry.

OSTENTATION has a considerable share in the affliction of the ambitious women we have just mentioned; for they take it into their heads, that it is fine to equal the continuance of their afflictions to that of their life, and choose this sad and fatiguing method of acquiring reputation.

IN short, interest is the cause of all great, lively and sensible afflictions. These are different in all respects from the griefs of imitation and ostentation; especially in this one particular: in griefs of imitation and ostentation, a man forces himself to appear more affected than in reality he is; whereas in afflictions caused by interest, what a person shews is much less than what he feels.

DIFFERENT as these three sorts of afflictions may be in other respects, they have, however, this in common among them, that they are all false and deceitful: for those who are afflicted thro' imitation and ostentation deceive others, and those who are afflicted thro' interest deceive themselves, since, thinking to lament their benefactors, they lament the situation to which they are reduced by their death.

OF VIRTUES WHICH DEPEND ON
PRUDENCE.

OF GRAVITY.

TH E inclination we have of dissembling, is the cause of there being two sorts of men : The first are those, who, in order to introduce themselves into the good graces of all the people with whom they live, give them continual proofs of their goodness, generosity and friendship : others aim at establishing themselves in the eyes of the world, by exposing their good qualities to view, or in making people imagine, not only that they have no bad

ones, but even that, whilst the inside of other men is agitated by passions, their's is always unruffled. In this last rank are those grave men, those composed and constrained men, who, abandoning themselves in private to the most base and and shameful passions, appear in public with a sage and serious air, consider what they are about, and weigh all their thoughts, to make the world imagine, that all the motions of their soul are as regular as those of their body, and that their outside is a representation of their inside.

THE gravity, which this sort of people seem to hang out as a badge of virtue, is so apparently false and affected, that, among the few that practise it, when we can be truly informed of their lives, we see their countenances are the same as other men's, and that their gravity is but a serious cheat, and a mere pedantry; but that it may be easily known and distinguished from gravity, which is the natural air of virtue, and is, as it were, its reflection
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KNOWING MANKIND. 177

on the outside of man, 'tis necessary to consider, that the wise man keeps a certain measure in all his actions; and that there is in all his words, his carriage, his gestures, and his steps, an harmony equal to that of musick.

To understand this, it is necessary to consider, that the harmony of songs does not consist in their slowness or quickness, nor in the exact mixture of the one and the other, but in their proper distribution, which derives it's choice and rules from their nature; from thence it comes to pass, that sad and mournful songs are full of languishments and lengthenings of the voice, whereas the voice flies quick in brisk songs, and hurries on with rapidity. It is the same with respect to the harmony of the words and actions of a wise man: it is not formed from their slowness, nor from their swiftness, nor from a modification of these two qualities; it springs from a judicious use which he makes of both, according to the subjects which occasion him to act or speak: so that there are some oc-

casions where his words are weighty and slow, and others where they are violent and flippant : and, altho' it is impossible to mark the divers degrees of sloth and quickness that all the different discourses and different actions require, one may nevertheless observe, that the wise man, who distinguishes and judges all, as Saint PAUL says, has an exquisite feeling, which makes him perceive every thing that is too slow or too hasty in his steps, his actions, and his words.

It is easy to conclude from what I have just said, that gravity is not an affected dullness ; and that the wise man, of whatever age, condition or profession he is, need never count his words, nor proceed according to computed steps : We may from hence also conclude, that the gravity of magistrates is a continual deceit and hypocrisy : for, as it is usually met with in men corrupted by the vices of the body and the soul, their outward composure is but a deceitful appearance ; and that they testify
falsely,

KNOWING MANKIND. 179

falsely, by their grave air, by their looks, and by their method of making it imagined, that they are exact in their manners.

BESIDES, a man should be as true in his actions as in his words ; and, as it is his duty never to say what is contrary to his thoughts, it is likewise his duty, never to appear any other than he is. “ We are “ not ashamed,” says SENECA, “ to affect the gravity of old men, and to follow the vices of youth.” “ Those men,” says Saint GREGORY, “ whose actions and “ appearances are all concerted, are usurpers “ of a good reputation ; and one may say, “ that it is in them that vice dares to take “ the honest appearance of virtue, *laudem* “ *vitæ rapit alienæ, & innocentiae honestate* “ *se vestit.*” ’Twas for that reason, that gravity has displeased so many solid philosophers. “ The manners of a wise man,” says CICERO, “ ought to be simple and natural.”

We may see also, when we make a strict scrutiny, be the thing ever so trifling, that the most usual cause of gravity, is, an excessive value we set on the esteem and respect of men, and, an immoderate desire of receiving honours, which makes all those who have any prerogative of merit, of knowledge, or of authority, desire to be revered, in all places, and at all times, by the world; and because their qualities are not always known, they smug themselves, and affect a grave air, as it were, to advertise those who are unacquainted with them, that they should humble themselves in their presence.

MEN think to draw the same advantages from fortune; that is the reason that favourites, those who fill the highest posts, have generally a method of proceeding, which marks their promotion; in a word, one does not wear the same countenance when in favour and when in disgrace, in good and in bad fortune, in opulence and poverty.

THERE

KNOWING MANKIND. 181

THERE are not even any magistrates, who only hold their office during the space of a year, that have not a different air whilst they are invested with the commission, from what they had before, or have after they are discharged; pride making them take that air, because it cannot suffer in men any pre-eminence which is not subservient to itself, and will not let them forget any thing which may contribute to their honour.

GRAVE appearances, sometimes, are of service to men, by removing the suspicion one might have of the dissoluteness of their lives; as a prudish and reserved air serves certain women to conceal their intrigues.

THERE is a third sort of grave men, who employ their gravity to persuade the world, they are men of great sense, penetration, and capacity: these sorts of gentry aim at being esteemed; and, as they see they have neither wit nor learning, they have recourse to artifice; they appear in company with all the seriousness and gravity

ty of sensible and judicious men. They speak more or less, with more or less assurance, and with an higher or lower voice, according to the capacity or incapacity of their auditors. They never enter on great nor on delicate subjects; and when they are treated of in their presence, they make, at different times, signs of approbation, or shews of understanding them; but never attempt to speak, unless forced to it, and then they only utter a few words, which they either speak indistinctly, or else express themselves in such an obscure manner as not to be understood.

OF MILDNESS.

IF we knew that man is possessed of an haughty and violent self-love, and that this love renders him passionate and inhuman, we should not be deceived by the apparent mildness of a man who is never trans-

KNOWING MANKIND. 183

transported by rage, because the world would judge of him as of a lion, which we believe to be furious and cruel, notwithstanding he does not hurt his keeper. We should not then declare, as it is customary at present, that this man is mild and peaceable; but should be contented to say, that he is tamed: but what is it that has the power to tame man? 'Tis most commonly the favour one does him, or that which he expects to receive.

To confirm this opinion, let us observe, that the favourites of kings and princes, and all the domesticks which are particularly beloved by their masters, endure their bad tempers, and sometimes even their rebuffs, with an extreme mildness: and what proves that this gentleness is a restraint to their natural inclinations is, that, whilst they appear so gentle to those on whom their fortune depends, they break out against the rest of the world, and are as the lion whom we have compared, who only

governs his ferocity in favour of his keeper, because he feeds him.

THIS gentleness proceeds often also from the fear of confusion; for pride, which gives a man a continual desire to render himself master of others, makes him much ashamed, whenever any one sees him transported with anger, and when he appears not to be master of himself.

MILDNESS is sometimes but a vanity, and an ambitious desire of triumph over a violent passion, which masters the greatest part of mankind. This sort of pride is generally met with in magistrates, in philosophers, and in all those who pique themselves on moderation, and desire to pass for wise men.

MILDNESS, in some people, is a desire of making themselves beloved by the world, and particularly by those with whom they are anywise connected: for there are virtues, as bravery, generosity and magnanimity, which gain us a good reception
in

KNOWING MANKIND. 185

the minds of men, and establish us in their esteem; and others, as goodness and gentleness, which open us a road to their hearts, and procure us their friendship.

THE love of peace and of their repose obliges many people engaged in a state of matrimony to restrain their ardent and impetuous humour, and to imitate the manners of mild and moderate people; because they do not see a better method of preserving peace in their families, than by contributing all they can on their side, and instructing their wives, their children, and their servants, by their example.

LENITY in disputes is a secret desire of overcoming those with whom we differ; it is the effect of experience which we have, that the heat of controversy hurts the judgment, which makes us endeavour to restrain from violence, to the end that, being in full possession of our reason, we may be the better able to express ourselves with energy and force, and that our opinions

nions may prevail. It is the same with respect to the mildness one shews in business; for it is a moderation which one keeps, only to take the advantage of those with whom one trafficks. 'Tis an habitual coolness, like to that which brave men preserve when they fight duels, by which they take time to give a mortal wound, or to run their adversary through the body.

THE gentleness of sovereigns, who, being able immediately to punish, either by exile or prison, those who have swerved from their proper obedience, bear without emotion their indiscretion and their insolence, is in them but a politic mildness.

THERE is, besides, a natural mildness; yet it does not make those possessed of it so insensible to injuries, but that they conceive an aversion for those who have done them, and desire to revenge themselves; so that they have the animosity and malignity of anger, tho' not its impetuosity. What makes this appear evident, is, that persons

persons of a cold and humid constitution, whose anger never breaks forth with violence, with all their coolness, do not omit retorting bitter expressions on those who offend or displease them, nor to slip the least opportunity of revenging themselves on those who have given any affront; so that all natural mildness can do, is to keep the exterior part of man placid and serene.

OF COMPLAISANCE.

ALTHO' complaisance appears so opposite to the inclinations of self-love, that it seems to sacrifice it every moment, it nevertheless serves it faithfully, and is much more useful to it, than the finest talents, or the most excellent qualities.

'Tis in truth a very common and very indifferent quality, but at the same time,

one

one which is very proper to gain success for the ambitious : it is oftentimes a very gross deceit, but one which is always agreeable : in short, 'tis a snare which all the world perceives, but which the finest and most delicate men are unable to escape.

THE complaisance shewn to the great, in not opposing their wills, and in following them on all occasions, and imitating them in all their fashions, is a flattery of action much more delicate and agreeable than that of words : for those, who conform themselves in every thing to their will, seem to tell them incessantly that they are right in all they do.

THIS sort of complaisance has in time a very great effect ; for it enters into the very intentions of self-love, which are to please itself in every thing, and at all times.

THERE is an habitual and anticipated complaisance : I call it so, because it makes a man approve the sentiment of those whom he would please, even before they have declared.

declared it; this sort of complaisance is only met with in old courtiers of a penetrating and right understanding: for the penetration and justness of their understanding, joined to their experience, make them know, to what a prince, a favourite, or minister, is inclined; so that they propose the measure which they conjecture they are about to take, which pleases them much more than all the praises that would be given after they had expressed their opinion. This crafty complaisance is of so great a value and of such great utility, that when it is in its utmost perfection, 'tis alone sufficient to compleat a courtier, and to carry his fortune higher than his expectations and his wishes.

THERE is a sort of general complaisance very displeasing, which makes those that are possessed of it approve all sorts of people, and excuse the most faulty proceedings and actions: these sort of complaisant folks signalize themselves when they speak of their friends; for they will never

allow that they have any fault, but will obstinately defend them, tho' manifestly in the wrong. Some of them even carry their complaisance so far, that they cannot admit a minister or great man whom they esteem, to be deficient in any one quality; not even in those which are not necessary for him, and which sometimes are even not becoming.

THERE is a certain wicked and criminal complaisance, by which certain corrupted men are so devoted to their friends, and the persons on whom they depend, that they approve of all they do, and are always disposed to do what they desire; with this difference however, that some of them obey the will of their friends, of their masters, and of their superiors, because they have not power to resist them; whereas others labour to do themselves all the violence and injustice that is possible to be conceived; and sacrifice their honour and their conscience to the passions of those who

KNOWING MANKIND. 191

who can do them any service, and from whom they expect to receive it.

THERE is a sort of tormenting and importunate complaisance, which one sees in certain people, who, being attached to a great lord, follow him like his shadow, and are continually prying to find out what he would be at, in order to prevent him and deprive him of the liberty of doing it, tho' it was but to take up a book which lay under his hand, and to find out a particular passage which he had a fancy to look for himself.

THERE is an honest sort of complaisant people, who preserve their dignity, and who have not always complaisance : which sometimes happens from this, that the heart, not being entirely subjected, cannot consent that they should humble themselves ; and that, on every occasion, they should constrain themselves, and betray their sentiments ; but what makes this happen much oftner is, that their cunning enables them to perceive that complaisance loses in general
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all its merit, or at least has not so great an effect, as soon as it is discovered; and that it is impossible it should not, if it appears so regularly.

THERE is another sort of complaisant persons, entirely opposite to those which I have just mentioned, who commit a thousand meanesses to make their court; they charge themselves with the most trifling commissions that ministers give them, and often perform at their houses, the office of valets and servants: this complaisance, which should only draw contempt on those who thus debase themselves, is, nevertheless, not always useless: for, however despised they may be by ministers and favourites, they do not fail to receive favours from them; they are, however, less than those they would obtain, if the ministers and favourites were not assured, that what conduct soever they keep with regard to them, or whatever treatment they give them, they shall not lose their favour.

'Tis easy to see, by all that has been said, that interest is the soul of comp'aisance ; that it disposes of man so absolutely, that, however haughty and proud he is, it makes him a base adorer and a subservient slave to all those who are possessed of great fortunes.

It is certain, that it is the most usual cause of complaisance : yet, it is not the only one ; for, there are complaisant people who have no other intention than to be regarded and loved by the societies to which they belong ; and others, who are so but to follow their natural propensity and inclination. This last sort of complaisance is the most regular and most lasting : the others follow whatever changes happen in their object, or that of their inclination.

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O F

OF AFFABILITY.

THE virtue which instigates princes and great men to be good, honest, and humane, and which regulates so well their civility, that it may be consistent with their dignity ; this virtue, I say, to which people give the name of affability, is the most powerful charm we can make use of to gain the good will of every one, especially where it is in perfection : for they not only give a free access to those who come to request their protection, but even anticipate their petitions, and spare them the shame which accompanies the necessity of making them ; they even espouse their interests, and think of every thing which may be serviceable to them.

It is true, that affability is a charm, the force of which is very difficult to be resisted ;

KNOWING MANKIND. 195

resisted ; but it is equally certain, that the use one makes of it, shews that it is not a true virtue : for the great men who practise it innocently, or, to speak more properly, less criminally, only practise it thro' pride ; that is to say, in order to have a great levee, which they look on as a pompous mark of their great credit, or birth. The least criminal sort of affability, I say, is that of those great lords, who only study to draw people to their houses, to satisfy their vanity : because the greatest part of them make this virtue subservient to the projects of their ambition ; and these, however affable and civil they may appear with respect to the court in general, are so in a much higher degree to those who have good places there, and who can be of service to them in obtaining the great employments and posts, at which they aim.

BUT affability is not barely vain and ambitious ; it is also artful and malicious ; such was the affability of ABSALOM. That example not only apprizes us of the ma-

lignity of this artful virtue, but also makes us observe, that it is particularly devoted to the designs of usurpers and factious people; and, that it is principally met with in the chiefs of parties: for, besides that it is only by the greatness of their assiduity they can keep their friends and partizans, who are often tempted and often brought over by the endeavours of the opposite party, it is also impossible for them to succeed but by the public favour: so that they must take notice of every one, they must keep open house, and receive every one civilly; and after they have spent the night in securing their friends by all means and methods, they must employ the day in caressing the miserable incendiaries, who have gained themselves credit, and become considerable among the people: and this was what made PINDAR say, that the life of partizans was an honourable fatigue.

THE affability of persons of quality, who have no merit, is a baseness of soul, and an incapacity for their rank;

OF

OF GENEROSITY.

WE have in general so great a regard and admiration for those who make a noise in the world by their generosity, that, it seems, there are public vows offered up for their prosperity and success: but it must be allowed, that if great lords, and all those in general who are reputed to have generous souls, were such as report represents them, we could not but esteem them very much; without doing them great injustice.

WE may see, however, that they are very different from what people imagine them to be, if we but take the trouble to remark that they lament the smallest expence in their own house, even whilst they are quite lavish in the eyes of the world; that they refuse necessaries to their relations, at the time they are superfluous in their gifts to others; and that they withhold the wages

and salaries of their servants, whilst they are extravagantly generous to strangers. This is the strongest proof possible, to shew that the liberality which makes so many people esteemed, is not virtuous ; and the force of this proof consists in this, that the characteristic of a true virtue is, to agree with all the other virtues. Besides, the generosity of those whose purse is always open to their friends, and who pique themselves on keeping nothing from them, is apparently contrary to justice ; because it is well known, that, whilst they make these voluntary benefactions, and do not let slip any opportunity of expending their money, they never think all this time of discharging their debts ; and, besides, they often give to one what they have borrowed, and what they have even sometimes stolen, from others.

THIS proof shews also, that the spirit which animates them, is a spirit of vanity, which makes them always find money enough to cut a figure, tho' they never care

to

to recompense a domestic grown old in the service of their family, nor to pay a merchant who has supplied them with his money, or a creditor whom they have ruined.

THESE men, celebrated for their liberality, are then but honourable violators of justice: There are two sorts of them; the first are those, who ruin themselves by their extravagances, and who rob their children of what they give to strangers; the second are governors of provinces, and such like, who draw from the public the means of enriching particulars; and the chiefs of parties, who, to gratify their friends, and to have wherewith to purchase popular favour, strip those who are not in the interest of the fortunes.

BUT, tho' they all bear a resemblance to each other in this, that they offend the justice due to themselves, or due to others, yet the motives which offer themselves are very different; for, as we have just re-

marked, there is one sett of them, whose liberality is entirely vain, and this is the most usual species of liberality ; another, whose liberality is vain and politic ; and a third, whose generosity is entirely politic.

THE second proof of the falsity of liberality is, that when a man proposes to himself any expence or bounty, in order to appear liberal, his avarice opposes his vanity, and resists it with all its force ; and, altho' this combat is concealed in his heart, it is discovered by the effects it produces.

IN fact, we see every day a great lord, who has had a sett of people of equal rank at his house, after giving orders that nothing should be wanting which was necessary to compleat an elegant and fashionable dinner, accounting the next day with the house-steward, disputing with him the price of all the victuals, and testifying by his anger, his uneasiness, and sometimes by his repentance, that he has appeared magnificent only
because

KNOWING MANKIND. 201

because ambition overcame his avarice ; and that a liberal man is, to define him properly, a martyr to his vanity.

AFFECTATION is a third proof that liberality is not a sincere virtue.

THE fourth proof is, that those who are esteemed for their liberality, perform all their generous actions publicly. From thence it comes to pass, that they are more or less liberal, according as the opportunities they have of behaving so are more or less apparent to the eyes of the world ; and that they are not so at all, where the opportunities are obscure and unknown ; and when they have no credible witnesses of their liberality.

PLAY is a fifth proof, that man is not truly liberal ; for, when his passion for play has disconcerted him, and rendered him unable to use that artifice by which he conceals his faults, the hopes of gain affect him so strongly, that, if he is in luck,

his joy appears in his face ; and, if he loses, one may see that he bears the loss with vast uneasiness : so that this same man, who seems to throw his money away by his profusion, with pain suffers it to be taken from him at play, and shews that he esteems and loves in his soul the money he piques himself on despising.

THE sixth proof is, that persons who pass for liberal, never observe the order of reason in the distribution of their gifts : for they often bestow bounties on those who neither want nor deserve them ; nor do they take the least pains to proportion to the nature of the wants ; and they even gratify those who are rich, and omit those, to whom a kindness bestowed in proper time would be an incredible assistance.

THIS mark of false liberality is a very strong one ; as, on the contrary, 'tis an infallible one of a man's being truly liberal, if he observes reason and equity in his liberality, if he prefers those objects where
merit

merit and bad fortune meet, and if he gives his money to widows oppressed with large families, or people whose lands are seized for trifling sums, that they may be enabled to pay their creditors.

WE prove in the last place, that man is not liberal ; because there is not one that is not avaricious : and the reason of this is, that all the passions are in some degree in the heart of man, and avarice consequently has a place there amongst the rest.

WHAT I have said explains this obscure saying of PLATO, “ that the virtue of men “ is but an exchange :” for this definition agrees perfectly with liberality ; since that which is generally practised is but an exchange of money for glory, or money for money, as one sees in those who squander away their money in the presence of princes and ministers, to oblige them genteelly to restore it to them, in pensions, places, or employments ; since in those men, soverely ambitious, who buy the votes of the people to gain empire, ’tis an exchange

of money for dominion; and that the liberality of lovers, who spend their fortunes in presents, and other foolish expences, is, but an exchange they make with the satisfaction they look for.

OF MERCY.

TO be thoroughly acquainted with mercy, we should not consider the lustre it receives from the contrast it bears to cruelty, nor regard it as it is in the thoughts and sentiments of those to whom it is favourable, nor judge of it by its appearance (for it is of the number of glittering virtues). We must see what it is in-itself, and weigh well the causes that produce it, which give just reason to doubt its being a true virtue.

THE

THE first is, that the princes, whose clemency these historians extol by their praises, only practised them on certain occasions, or during some particular time; whereas true virtue is equal, it's reign in man is not that of a few days, or still less of a few hours; and, as five or six fine days do not make spring, and tis necessary to have a considerable number of them, "in the same manner," says ARISTOTLE, "there must be a long train of virtuous actions to make a virtuous man." 'Tis this evenness which is the characteristic of true virtue; and this is an equality not to be found in the clemency of JULIUS CÆSAR, of AUGUSTUS, and ALEXANDER; not one of them having been merciful with perseverance, that is, on all occasions where it was proper to be so.

THE second proof, which gives a more clear insight into the falsity of human clemency, arises from this, that we see it in conjunction with cruelty in those persons we have quoted; which is an invincible argument

gument that, whilst they did those merciful acts, they had not the inclinations and sentiments of mercy, and that they had not in their souls that goodness, which makes men always incline to mildness and indulgence: for that sort of goodness is incompatible with severity. "What!" (perhaps it may be said) "are the acts of cruelty, committed by those renowned men, infallible proofs that they have never been merciful? Might they not have been so, and after have become cruel?" This is the argument of PLUTARCH, of QUINTUS CURTIUS, and the greater part of the historians, who, after having attributed certain virtues to those whose history they were writing, upon the authority of some actions apparently virtuous, and afterwards finding them to be subject to vices opposite to those virtues for which they have celebrated them, persuade themselves, and assert to the world, that those vices arose from a change in their manners, and that they were not natural to them.

KNOWING MANKIND. 207

IF I valued my own private opinion as any thing, I should say, that it is a mistake to think that there are men, who, being naturally mild, become cruel ; and others, who, being born cruel, become mild and gentle, because our inclinations are so attached to our constitution, that it is as impossible to change the one as the other ; it is true, that the constitution changes in some respects ; and, when the blood is chilled, a man is not so fiery as he was in the ardour and heat of youth : but that the change is great enough to destroy our inclinations entirely, and that the coldness of the blood extinguishes our ruling passions, is what I have never known ; but, on the contrary, I have seen people, at the age of eighty years, some of whom were choleric and violent, others liars, artful, and ill-designing, as much as they were at twenty-five or thirty : I have even observed that, though the fear of being turned into ridicule is so powerful over all men who have any sense or feeling, yet we cannot but see men of spirit, who in a very advanced

vanced age, at a time of life when one is deprived of all the powers of pleasing, cannot give up their pretences to gallantry. In a word, it seems to me, that there is neither age, nor exhortation, nor promises, nor menaces, nor chastisement, powerful enough to correct our bad inclinations when they are naturally imbibed ; and they triumph over every thing, even over nature itself. The clemency of kings, whose reign is not tyrannical, is sometimes a policy, and a method they make use of to gain the hearts of their subjects, and especially of such of their nobles as have qualities which make them dreaded ; for they hope to prevent them by this means from making cabals at court, and troubling their states by forming leagues and parties, and from conspiring against their person ; which they hope with sufficient appearance of reason, because it is not common to conceive such perfidious and wicked designs against a king whom we love.

THE

THE good humour which is found in sovereigns is likewise a frequent cause of their clemency, whether that good humour proceeds from the position of their body, or the good news they have heard, or some secret satisfaction of their desires and passions ; for every time that a man is perfectly content, he has an inclination to content others, and to grant them what they wish, and what they demand, with zeal.

THERE are occasions likewise, where the clemency of kings is but a vain ostentation of their sovereign power ; for, as nothing so much flatters the pride of man as elevation, so nothing is so pleasing to his vanity as that which presents it to him, and makes it apparent to others ; besides, mercy shews that sovereigns are above the law, and that they have not only a power to take away, but also to give life.

WHEN

WHEN mercy is common in a prince, far from being a virtue, it is in him an extinguishment of all the royal virtues ; 'tis even a quality so prejudicial to states, that it is almost always the cause of their ruin ; 'tis an ignorance of the utility and necessity of justice, " without which," says Saint AUGUSTINE, " republics and " empires are great societies of robbers." 'Tis a false and ill-designed goodness, 'tis a cruel mildness, and a vicious indifference for good order and the public repose.

THERE are many other causes for the clemency of sovereigns ; the first is, the power we have over their minds : for there is scarce one of them to be found who does not devote his affections to some person that is agreeable to him, or over whom some person has not the ascendant ; so that, through a desire of pleasing

sing them they love, they are always disposed to comply with their requests.

ADDRESS is a second cause of the clemency of sovereigns, which is scarce less powerful than the first, as it proceeds from this, that, among the great privileges which make their condition in life envied, they have this misfortune, that as in the distribution of favours, of places, and employments, they seem to be masters, 'tis very necessary they should be always so; the reason of which is, that, as soon as he is about to dispose of a government or do a favour, a king is attacked by all those who have a share in his good graces and confidence, and he has nothing but that to defend himself; so that how is it possible for him to resist so many fit and proper persons? What can he do, when a man attacks him so many different ways, and when he lays the same thing before him in so many various

rious manners ? is it in his power to refuse giving it ? That is not possible at least in general ; which is the reason that a courtier, who has any affair of consequence, makes it his first care to engage all the ministers in his favour.

IMPORTUNITY is the third cause of the clemency of kings ; and it sometimes forces from them a forgiveness of crimes. An afflicted father throws himself at the sovereign's feet, and conjures him to pity his grief, and pardon his only son, who has killed his antagonist in a duel : He is refused, but : he does not retire upon a denial ; on the contrary, he continually presents himself, even at the hours in which the prince would chuse to be at liberty. At length the king resolves to do what he requests, not because he is moved by his intreaties, but to deliver himself

KNOWING MANKIND. 213

self from the plague of an importunate
suitor ; for men, and especially kings,
wish to be always at their ease, and to en-
joy a repose free from every molestation
whatsoever.

F I N I S.

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